

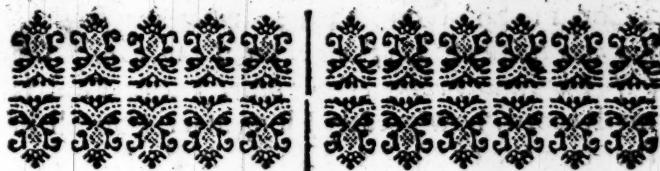
AN ALLEGORY
GOSPEL - CHURCH:
O R,
GOD'S Holy TEMPLE
OPENED.

Wherein is shewed from the Scriptures, 1. What a Gospel-Church is: 2. That such a Church is of Divine Institution. 3. With what Materials such a Church should be formed. 4. The Form of such a Church, and how it should be built. 5. The several Officers and Offices in the said Church, and their respective Works and Dutys there. 6. The Duties of Church-Members to their Officers. 7. Their Duties to one another. 8. Their Church-Priviledges, and several other matters and concernments which may not here be mentioned, but may be found in the Epistle; all intended for the spiritual profit of Church-Members.

By *Stephen Ford*, Preacher of the Gospel
in *London*.

These things I write unto thee, that thou may'st know how thou ought'st to behave thy self in the House of God, 1 Tim. 3. 14, 15. Blessed are they that dwell in thy House, they will be still praising thee: They go from strength to strength, every one appearing before God in Zion, Psal. 84. 4, 7.

London, Printed in the Year, 1675.



THE
EPISTLE
DEDICATORY.

To my entirely beloved, the Elders,
Deacons, and to the rest of the Church
of Christ, over whom the Holy Ghost
hath made me an Overseer.

Friends,



*Am yours, and I hope you are
Christ's. 1 Cor. 3. 22, 23. You are
exceeding dear to me, and ly deep
in my heart; 1 Thes. 2. 8. Phil.
1. 7. and you are my joy, and
crown of rejoycing: especially,
some of you. 1 Thes. 2. 19, 20. Phil. 4. 1. Your
welfare and happiness is mine; your thriving and
growing in Grace, and in the saving knowledge of
Jesus Christ, 2 Pet. 3. 18. is mine, and your
standing fast in the Lord, and bearing much fruit
is my comfort, 1. Thes. 3. 7. 8, 9. your Tryals and*

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Afflictions are mine, and your witherings and languishings are my great afflictions and sorrows. 2 Cor. 11. 29. Rom. 12. 15. whatever some of you may think or say of me: yet I can boldly say (if I know any thing of my heart) that God is my Record, how greatly I long after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ, Phil. 1. 8. how thoughtful, and studious I am to serve you, and to promote your present and eternal Blessedness, and that by all the wayes and means I can. And if I am not succesful in my designs and endeavours, it is my burden, and I cannot help it. I know that Ministers may and ought to plant and water, but 'tis God that giveth the increase, 1 Cor. 3. 7. I know that I am weak, and I know also, that the happy success of good mens labours, lies not in, or proceeds not from their Abilities, but from the Power of God, and his Spirit working with and by them; or else even a great Prophet Isaiah may say, I have laboured in vain, Isa. 49. 4. yet I say, my Conscience is my witness, that it is my desire, aim and endeavour to be faithful to Christ and you, and to give all diligence to my work and your service; to Preach the word in season; and out of season, 2 Tim. 4. 2. to feed you with the Bread of sound Doctrine, and to give to every one their portion of meat in due season. I know and believe, that the all-seeing-eye of my great Lord and Master is still on me; and that I must shortly give unto him an account of my Stewardship; Luk. 16. 2. how I have performed my work, and discharged my Trust to you: and therefore, I dare not but endeavour to be faithful in my Duty to Him and You. Should any of you suffer loss, by any neglect or unfaithfulness of mine, the sight and conviction of

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it would exceedingly afflict me: for I do greatly love you. I would be eminently Instrumental in nursing, educating and building you up in Christ, in knowledge, faith, love, peace, joy, holiness and spiritual consolation, unto eternal life, and am really afflicted that I can do no more towards the attainment of it, and that I am no more successful in what I do.

I hope you have some clear proofs and evidences, of what I have said of my self and endeavours, from my practises among you. For what other ends can I have in all my labours and spendings, but to serve Christ and your Souls, especially, in and by those that are extraordinary? what should I aim at and design in the Monthly Lecture to and with you onely; in my Lords dayes fortnights Lecture, and in writing this and some other books, but your good? you know, that I have spent my strength in a more than ordinary manner to convince, regenerate and educate your Families; your Children, Servants, and other Relations of yours. For as I have told you; It was for their sakes that I set it up, and have continued it many years; but how you have esteemed and encouraged it, and how your Relations have improved it, I leave to all your Consciences to judge. But however, I have given you a sufficient proof of my love to you, and care of them, by spending my strength and spirits with, and for their good: and all unprejudiced persons cannot but acknowledge it. I could have sit down (as others do) with Preaching to you twice every Lords day, and one Lecture in the week-days; had I not seen a necessity of doing more, and had not my cordial Love to your Souls constrained me to the taking of extraordinary pains with you, and for you.

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you. My ends and designs in the said Monthly Lecture were (1) To acquaint you with, and convince you of your duties in the Church, and that every one of you might know how to behave your selves in the house of God; 1 Tim. 3. 15. and what duties were or are incumbent on you there, (2) To acquaint you with your Church-privileges and spiritual advantages, that you might value and esteem them; own and imbrace them; improve and walk worthy of them; and that you might be thankful for them. (3) That you might know on what bottom you stand in your Church-state, and that you might stand there unmovably. (4) That you might know your miscarriages in your Church-state and Relation, and be humbled for; and repent of them in Dust and Ashes. (5) That you might know the Evils and Temptations you are lyable to in a Church-state, and that you might watch against and avoid them. (6) That you might be enabled to answer Gain-sayers, and refell their objections. (7) That you might look for, and expect all the promised good in your Church-state, and endeavour the obtainment of it. (8) To quicken and provoke you, to move and perswade you to all possible diligence, care and faithfulness, to, and in your own, Jesus Christ's, and one anothers concerns in your Church-state. That you might be pleasing to God, and profitable to your own and each others Souls in the Ordinances of Christ, and in your Union and Communion one with another. These were some of my ends in setting up that Lecture, and which I have with some measure of sincerity of heart carried on, though under no small discouragements from within and without.

And

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And in pursuance of these and other holy ends, I have written some of the matters that I preached to you, and have made them ready for your eyes to read and behold them, your judgements and understandings to judge of them, and for your hearts to receive and embrace them: and that upon your desire I have done it; as you know.

They are your matters, and therefore to you, I do dedicate and commend them, because I love you: and if you give me encouragement, I could willingly spend, and be spent for you, 2 Cor. 12. 15. Brethren, I grudge not at any pains and endeavours, cares and labours, I have taken and expended on you or yours: for, I think, that all that I can do for you is too little. I do heartily wish, I could be more serviceable and profitable to you; and the more you shall encourage and strengthen my hands to serve you, the better I shall do it. I have taken pains to write this Book, or to compose, and set forth the matters contained in it, as well as I could: had I been able, I should have done it better. But however it be done, be you sure, that the matters discoursed of, are of great weight and moment to you. You will find but little in it of man (human frailties excepted) but therefore I hope, you will find the more of God and Gospel-Truth there. For the Truths of God shine forth more gloriously, when they appear in their naked native beauty and simplicity, than when they come to us cloathed with humane Eloquence, and with the Rhetorical flourishes of mens wits. They are such glorious things in their own nature, as that they are never more powerful on, and acceptable to holy gracious hearts, than when they are represented to them pure, clear and entire in their own words and language,

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guage, strip of humane Ornaments and Garnishes.

My design was not to commend my self, but the real, the holy, and acceptable will of God: not to shew you, what any men think or judge of these matters, but to shew you, what the Holy Ghost thinks and speaks of them. I expect severe censures from others, (because far better mens works do usually meet with them) but I hope to meet with none from you, for love will cover a multitude of weakneses in those, whose aim, end and design is good in any good work; and you cannot but judge that mine was good in this good undertaking. You put me on the work, and I hope you will find nothing but Truth and plainness in it, and cover my infirmities with a mantle of charity; judge that I have performed it as well as I could, for Christ's, my own and your sakes, and conclude, that I have not wilfully, knowingly or carelessly failed in any part of it. Now it is prepared for you, and brought to you by a hand of love, I hope you will take the pains to read and mind it, to understand and practise the duties contained in it: and although the form of it (as made by me) may not have your esteem and consideration, yet do not fail to give the matter of it it's due Respects and acknowledgment, let your Head and King, his Truths and wayes, have their dues from you; as also your own Souls; and you will greatly gratifie the Authour, who is your real friend.

In this Book, I have shewed you in several Chapters (1) What an instituted Gospel-Church is. (2) That particular Congregational Churches are of Divine Institution. (3) Of what matters they should be constituted and formed.

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(4) What is the form of such Churches, or how fit materials should be joyned together, and made a formal house. (5) The several Officers of a Church, with their calls, qualifications, works and duties. (6) The duties of Church-members to their Officers. (7) Their duties to one another. (8) Their Church-priviledges and advantages. (9) I have shewed that all Believers are indispensibly bound to joyn themselves to some Gospel-Church, if they can. (10) What the Ordinances are, that God hath given to his Churches. (11) How all Church members ought to walk towards God and men, and what Evils and Temptations they are subject to, or in danger of. (12) I have spoken something of the Lords Supper, and of many other things and matters of great moment, as you will find in your reading of the Book throughout: As that Church-members ought not to break off from the Churches, to which they are joyned, but in extraordinary cases. I have not yet done; but shall present a few Requests to you, for my self, my God, and your own Souls; and which I hope you will not deny me, but freely grant me, because you will find them very reasonable Requests, and such as do nearly concern you and your God, as well as my self.

I. I do earnestly entreat and beseech you, for the Lord Jesus Christ his sake, and for the love of the Spirit, to do all you can, and are bound in duty to do, to encourage me in my work, strengthen my hands under my weights and burdens, and help me to run my Race, and finish my course with joy, 1 Cor. 9. A^ct. 20. 24. and avoid whatever may justly discourage, tempt and provoke me; or that may weaken my hands, grieve and sadden my heart,
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misfit & indispose me for & in my work & duty with you. For if you do not avoid it, you will tempt and provoke me to sin, and hinder me in my work and duty. And my sin will be your sin, my loss your loss, and my sorrow will be your sorrow at long run. I can appeal to God, that I seek, desire and endeavour to do you good in whatever I do or propound to have done for, or among you; and therefore, when you neglect to come to the worship of God, and keep your place; and when you neglect to set forward any good work in the Church for the honour of Christ, and the profit of the whole, you do discourage me, and tempt me to sin: and the like you may do, many other wayes; which for brevity sake, I shall not mention. Only this one. namely, by your non-proficiency under the means of grace, which will be my great Affliction, because I dearly love you. Your serious, conscientious and constant attendance on the administration of the Ordinances of Christ with me; your growing in grace and profiting by them; your readiness to help and assist me in promoting and carrying on of good works in the Church, and standing by me in the Lord's work will exceedingly comfort & encourage me in my Ministerial work. And pray consider, if it be not your duty, and the will of God you should so do. Heb. 13. 17. Obey them that have the Rule over you, and submit your selves, for they watch for your Souls, as that they may do it with joy and not with grief: why? why (says he) that is unprofitable for you.

Oh! give me your helping hand, and do not load and burden my work, but endeavour to make my work easie; and my life comfortable to the utmost of your power,

2. Pray

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2. Pray for me, *Heb. 13. 18.* and that with all possible importunity and constancy. For the more you do so pray to God for me, the more profitable he will make my labours to your Souls. Pray for me in your Closets, and wrestle with God for me: for you, (especially) you who walk with God, may do much for me in your Closets. I do remember you in mine; Oh! let me be remembered by you in your Closets also. For a stock of Prayers, of hearty, believing, fervent Prayers, kept a-running one for another, will bring in a great Revenue of grace from Heaven to us. You cannot expect, that I should Preach warmly, profitably and powerfully to you, unless you so Pray for me. Therefore in obedience to the will of God, and for your own profit, do you continue in fervent Prayer unto God for me. Entreat him to pour out much of the Spirit of grace and the grace of the Spirit upon me, fill me with Ministerial gifts, and make me an able Minister of the New Testament. That God may give me the door of utterance, and enable me to speak, as I ought to speak, *Eph. 6. 20.* That God may work in me whatever is well-pleasing in his sight, *Heb. 13. 21.* fulfill in me all the good Counsel of his will, and the work of faith with power, *2 Thes. 1. 11.* that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in me, and by me. Oh! Pray for me, that I may be kept faithful to Christ and you; that I may labour and not faint, run and not be weary; that I may be able to bear up under all Burdens and Temptations, and be able to overcome and conquer them all; That I may rightly divide the word of Truth, and administer the holy Ordinances of Christ according to his will, so, as that he may be magnified,
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and your Souls profited; That my heart may stand clear off the World, and that I may not be taken and entangled with any snares, and that I may perfect holiness in the fear of God, 2 Cor. 7. 1. and for whatever else you may rationally judge, I may stand in need of, as your Minister.

3. I do request you, that if at any time you do certainly see, and undoubtedly know any failing or miscarriage in, or by me, that you will speedily, seriously, meekly, humbly, and as you ought to do, inform me of it. It is your duty to do so; if you do it as you ought, and may do it, I shall (through grace assisting) receive it, thank you, and bless God for it, and account it my mercy. But I shall desire you, to take heed and beware of these three evils towards me in this matter. (1) That you do not fancy and make evils or miscarriages for me, and then charge them on me, as mine; when in truth they are not so. It is a very dangerous thing to condemn the Righteous, and justify the wicked, as you know, Prov. 17. 15. and it is most dangerous, and abominable in the sight of the Righteous God to condemn, or falsely to charge his Embassadors, because they stand in his stead, bear his Image of Authority, and do his Ministerial work in his Churches. And yet how common is this evil among Professors, as I can testify? (2) Do not take up a Report from others against me, and take it for granted, because you hear some Professors of the good wayes of God tell you so. For the World, yea, and the Churches also are too full of slanderous and back biting Tongues. They are not aware of this evil, but hug and embrace it in their bosoms, practise it without fear, and commit this abomination with both hands, as the Prophet speaks.

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speaks. Remember that Jesus Christ hath strictly charged you, in 1 Tim. 5. 19. that you do not so much as receive an Accusation against an Elder, under two or three witnesses; and that on their certain knowledge of the F. & C. not upon their conjectures, and feigned Circumstances. For God is very curious and tender of their good Names, Credit and Reputations, and he knows, and all wise and holy men do know, that they are more obnoxious to the Envy, and that they lye more open to the wrath and hatred of men, than other men do. Therefore, I say, God hath set a higher mound about their good Name, for their security, than about others. (3) Do not take up my real or supposed miscarriages, and spread them before others. Oh! my Brethren, let not this filthy devilish wickedness be found in you: let not others hear of my faults, before I do my self: be not you Back-biters and Whisperers against him, who loves you so much, as that he could spend and be spent in the service of your Souls, and who seeks your good all he can. Requite not his love to you with such mischief and wickedness against him, for the Lord's sake. You may do him much wrong thereby, but you will much more wrong Christ and your own Souls. And let none of you think, that Jesus Christ is an idle Spectator of what you do herein, that he observes you not, or that because you imagine you intend him no hurt in what you say of him, that therefore he will hold you guiltless. No, no: be not deceived, for God will not be mocked: what a man soweth, that shall he reap, Gal. 6. 7. God doth not say, you may speak evil of his Ministers, or other men, if you intend not to hurt them thereby; no: but he doth expressly forbid you to back bite, or

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Speak of their evils (though real) at all, behind their backs, until they prove incorrigible, and have rejected your reproofs and endeavours to convince and convert them, Levit. 19. 16, 17. Jam. 4. 11. Tit. 3. 2. Rom. 1. 30, 31. Psal. 15. 3. 2 Cor. 12. 20. But in truth this excuse or pretence is but a carnal, blind, and diabolical delusion, to shut the eyes of men, and harden their hearts against the evils of it, that they may commit it with the more peace and satisfaction, that neither men nor their own Consciences may reprove or controul them, and cry shame on them for their sins, and that they may not be obstructed, or any way impeded in their doing of that wherein they find pleasure. Neither indeed, can they prove that they do not hate them, or intend their hurt. For it is infallibly certain that they do not really love such, and that they are prejudiced against them, and do not in truth seek their good. For can I persuade any reasonable man by the rules of Reason, that I love him, and seek his good in the dark (as to him) by doing or speaking that which experience shews, will inevitably tend to his hurt, to his shame and reproach, and to the alienating of others affections from him. Well then, tell me of my real faults to my face, that I may mend and do so no more, for that is the Will of Christ, Matth. 18. 15. (4.) I do request you to Visit me, and let me have your good Company as often as conveniently you can; and when we meet, let our coming together be for the better, and not for the worse. Surely, I think it is your Duty to give me loving Visits, as well as I you, and that when you come, you shew a readiness to spend our Time, and improve our Visits to the profit of our Souls, unless the meeting be design-
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ed for other business. The strangeness of some is no small burden to my spirit, and I know not how their Consciences do dispence with such Omissions. How can we think that such do really Love one another, who regard not each others Company, nor, though they live near together, will vouchsafe to give them a Visit in a whole year together? For true Love inclines to Communion, free and open-hearted Society together; and it is so far from being burdensome to true Lovers so to do, as that it is their delight. Church-members are bound in duty to give their Teachers friendly Visits, to encourage them in their Works, and to get some good from them to their own Souls. They should come and propound Cases to them, that concern their Faith, Practise, Peace, and Comfort, and declare to them their Soul troubles and temptations, and likewise their profit and gettings by their Ministry. They should open unto them their Soul-wants and Spiritual diseases, that so they may know the better how to suit their Ministry to them, and apply words in season to their Conviction, Instruction, and Comfort. For the Priests Lips should preserve knowledge, and the People should seek the Law at his mouth, for he is the Messenger of the Lord of Hosts, *Mal. 2. 7.* Mark it, It is not said that they should always, or mostly go to their People, but that the People should seek to them. Thus the Disciples came to the Lord Jesus with their Cases. And truly Friends, you would greatly rejoyce my heart, if I might see the same practised by you in a holy and serious manner. I do assure you, that you should be very welcome to me, and I shall most freely afford you my help, and give you what assistance I can. And I do further request and en-

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treat you, that when I come to visit you, that then I may find you ready to entertain me with some profitable discourse, that may better us in the Inner man; for that is the best Entertainment I desire or expect from you; and it is that which I am sure will turn to the best account now, and at the last day. These are some of my reasonable requests to you for my self, which I hope you will not deny me.

2. I have a few requests to you for God, and your Head and King, the Lord Jesus Christ. (1.) That you would still remember how you have received him, as your Lord Jesus Christ, and so walk ye in him, Col. 2. 6. Examine the Foundation you stand upon, and take not up with Reformation without Regeneration and real Union with Christ by Faith. It is to be feared that too too many Church-members sit down short of Christ, a new State, and a thorow change of heart; that they content themselves with their being in the Churches of Christ, the use of Ordinances, and with their Church-priviledges. We read of five Foolish Virgins in fellowship with five Wise Virgins; and we read of bad Fishes in the Nets with the good; of Tares growing amongst the good Wheat; and of Hypocrits in the Kingdom of Heaven, (the Churches) which Christ shall gather out and cast into the fire, Matth. 25. 2. Matth. 13. 47, 48, 49, 50. Isa. 33. 14. Take good heed that none of you be such: You have past the Test of mens judgments, and they take you for true Saints in their Char table judgments; but you may be notorious Hypocrites for all that, and you must pass under the Infallible Tryal and Judgment of God too, who can and will make a true Judgment of you. Therefore
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do you endeavour to know your own States by serious and diligent search, 2 Cor. 13. 5. 2 Pet. 1. 10. You may be Members of a true Church of Christ, and yet not be true Members of Christ; you may be United to his People in Church-fellowship, whilst you are Strangers to Christ. And know, that if you are Hypocrites in the Churches, you are an Abomination to him; you defile his holy Temple, and his Soul abhors you.

But I say, if upon your serious tryal of your selves, you find indeed, that you are new Creatures, and have really received Christ the Lord on his own terms, then do you walk in him, and worthy of him, Col. 1. 10. Own him, Trust him, Love him, Obey him, Subject and Live to him, as to your Head, Lord, and King. Receive, and walk by his Laws and Rules only, and give him the Honour and Glory of his Headship, and Authority over you, in, and by your so doing, Luk. 6. 46. Remember that you are the Servants of Christ, bought with a price, even the price of Christ's Blood, that you should be his Servants and Subjects; therefore be you not the Servants of men, in his matters and concernments, 1 Cor. 7. 23. (2.) Do you stand up, and be Zealous for, and in the cause of your Lord and King, Rev. 3. 19. You are redeemed to it, Tit. 2. 14. and your Head expects it from you. Keep your hearts with him and for him, and suffer no Stranger, no Lust, Self, or any Creature to Usurp and Possess his Throne in you. Shew your Zeal against all Intruders, and fight them off when ever they assault you, or attempt to get possession of your hearts. Be you Zealous for, and in his pure Gospel-worship and Ordinances; for, and in upholding, sanctifying and celebrating
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of them in the Church. (3.) Encourage and promote the Interest of Christ in each others hearts; and to enrich one another with the Truths and Grace of Christ as much as you can; for it is your duty so to do, and you will thereby please and glorify him, 1 Thes. 5. 11. Jude 20. You should labour to augment, encrease, and nourish the Graces, Comforts, and Experiences; provoke, strengthen, and stir up one another to Love, Trust, Fear, Honour, and Serve Christ more and better, For this is the Will of God concerning you, 1 Thes. 5. 18.

(4.) Honour Christ by reprovving your sinning-Brethren, and endeavouring all you can to hide it from the knowledge of others, and to restore them with a spirit of meekness, not suffering sin to rest upon them, Gal. 6. 1. Lev. 19. 17. Lift them out of the ditch of Sin, whereinto Temptation hath cast them, and that with all possible secrecy and privacy for the honour of Christ and your Brethren, and for the good of their Souls who have sinned. Sin (especially in Church-members) carries Reproach in its mouth, on Christ, his Ways and Temples; and therefore by the same Argument and Reason, and for the self-same cause, that we are to honour Christ, and prevent all Reproach to his Name, Gospel, and People, we should hide each others sins as long as possible, and there is hope; and endeavour privately to heal offences, and cure the Offenders.

(5.) Labour to shine as Lights in all manner of holy Conversation and Godliness, 2 Pet. 3. 11. Declare whose you are, and what you are, to all men, by your fruits of Holiness and Righteousness, Matth. 5. 16. Phil. 2. 15, 16. O remember that you are the Living Witnesses of Jesus Christ in the World, Isa. 43. 10, 12. Isa. 44. 8, 9. Rev. 11. 3.

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and therefore you should endeavour all you can, negatively and positively, by words, deeds, and carriages, to make full proof of, and give in your good Testimony to the holy Name, and to the Excellency of the Grace and good ways of Jesus Christ. The Churches of Christ in the World, are as Beacons set on Hills, which attract and draw the eyes of all men to them. They watch for your halting, and are very curious in marking your steps; and that will be made a fault in you, which is not in others, Psal. 27. 11, 12. Therefore you must be a singular People before all men, and so walk as to shame your Enemies, and that they may have no evil thing (justly) to say of you, 1 Pet. 3. 16. And you must not only be good negative Professors and Walkers, but you must also shine and be fruitful in every good work, and in gracious words and carriages. You should be excellent living Witnesses to Christ and his ways, by shining in Humility, Meekness, Temperance, Love, Charity, Kindness, Self-denial, Justice and Righteousness; in Seriousness and Gravity, in Sweetness and Affability, and in all Holiness, Heavenly-mindedness, Zeal, and Spirituality; in Goodness, Peaceableness, or in what-ever Grace or Virtue may adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. These are some of the things I do request of you for God and your King. As likewise that you lay to heart his Love and Grace to you, and endeavour to affect your hearts with them, stir them up to all cordial thankfulness, and oblige them to live and love forth praises to his holy Name. Remember, that you are under Electing, Redeeming, Regenerating, Quickening, Teaching and Comforting Love and Graces; and that you are entrusted with,

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And have the enjoyments of many glorious privileges in your hands, for the filling you with all the fulness of Christ; and nourishing you up unto eternal Life in your Church-state, Joh. 1. 16. Eph. 4. 11, 16. Psal. 92 Psal. 132. I have some Requests to you for, and in the behalf of your own Souls. Indeed all the other things desired of you already, have respect and relation unto the good and profit of your own Souls, as well as to my good and God's Glory. But that which I shall now desire of you, respects your Soul directly and immediately; and therefore I hope you will easily and readily grant them for your own sakes; although Jesus Christ, and my self are concerned in them also.

1. Endeavour to profit by your means and privileges, and to grow in all Grace in your Church-state and enjoyments therein. Do not rest satisfied with your Church-state and Priviledges, but make serious enquiry after your gettings; and what good, what spiritual profit you find in them, make use of them all to the gracious and holy ends for which they are given to you. Namely, to Teach and Instruct you; to Feed and Nourish you; to Arm and Strengthen you; to Comfort and Refresh you; to Confire and Establish you in the Faith of Christ; to Purge and Sanctifie you; to Confirm and Seal you up unto the day of Redemption, and to convey the Spirit and Grace of Christ into your hearts. To acquaint you with your selves, and enable you to know and discern the worst and best of your selves; what God hath done for you, & what sin, the world, and Devil have done against you. To acquaint you with Jesus Christ, his Love, Grace, Truth, Providences, and Benefits, and to bring him into your Hearts, and into Fellowship and Communion with

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with you. Therefore look after these Ends, and other of like Import, and see that you do indeed and in Truth prosecute and obtain them, and take not up short of them. Oh! be you sure to mind your Earnings in all your Enjoyments, and God's Ordinances.

2. Take hold of such Counsels, Reproofs and Instructions, as your Brethren shall give you in time of need, to prevent your Sinning, or to reduce and turn you back from Sin to Duty. O remember, that it is a choice means, and one of God's Holy Ordinances to do you good: yea, to do you a great deal of good, and an unexpressible Pleasure. And therefore, if you love your Souls, turn not a deaf Ear to them; slight them not, nor harden your Hearts against them. But hearken to, and close up with them; Embrace them as choice Mercies to you; bless God exceedingly for them, and love and thank your Counsellors, and Reprovers heartily. For it is an invaluable mercy, to have such true Friends at hand; who will express so much love to, and care of us, as that when they see us in danger of falling, shall give us their preventing succouring-hand, to support and hold us up; or when they see us fall and need their help, they shall not Ham-like, Gen. 9. 22. go and tell others of it, but seasonably give us their hands, to help us up again. Oh! be not angry with them, but love and thank them, and take, receive and reverence their Voice, as the Voice of God. And know, that if you reject and slight it, or are displeased with them for their Work and Labour of Love to you; you do thereby reject and slight the Voice of God, and are displeased at his Merciful dispensation to you for your good. For your Instructors and Counsellors,

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lors, were sent to you by God himself ; and it was he that inclined their Hearts to go, and opened their Mouths to speak to you, and do for you so great an office of Love. Therefore, be you of that wise sort of Men, who will bear Reproof from their Friends, Prov. 1. 5. Prov. 9. 8, 9. Prov. 10. 8. Prov. 12. 15. Prov. 25. 12. and own it as the Voice of God.

3. Be careful that you stay not, or take up in Ordinances, but go to, and have your eye on Christ in them. We are exceeding apt to stick fast in the way of coming to God, and to sit down short of the end ; of the God and grace of the means ; and without great heedfulness and circumspection in this matter, we may easily run ourselves deep in sin ; and thereby wrong our Souls, as also by the want of the God and grace of the means. Mind that Text in Esa. 64. 5. Thou meetest him that remembers thee in thy wayes ; namely, such as seek God in his wayes, and pass thorow them, unto himself. But observe, that by sticking in, and taking up with Ordinances you greatly sin against God, by making a God of Ordinances ; setting up his Creatures in his place and Throne, giving unto them his Honour and Glory, and robbing him of his due. You neglect the fountain of living waters, and hew out to your selves broken Cisterns, that can hold no water : which the Holy Ghost calls two evils, Jer. 2. 13. You will thereby grieve the Holy Spirit, cause him to withdraw from you, and withhold the blessings and good of his Ordinances from your Souls. Oh ! my Brethren, little do many of you think how deep you are under the guilt of this sin, and what a Controversie God hath with your Souls for it ; and little do you think
what

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what losers and sufferers you are thereby. Little do many think how often they are caught in this snare, and how exceedingly offensive it is to God, and detrimental to their own Souls. Wonder not that Ordinances profit you not, and that God is not with you in them; if you stick in, and take up with them. In love I give you warning of it, that you may consider it, watch and pray against it; that you may carefully mind and do what God requires in his Worship and Ordinances; namely, that you go to, and seek him in them indeed. And remember, that it is your Duty, that you must; and your Privilege, that you may go to, and find him and his Grace in them.

(4.) Live by faith in all your wayes, and make use of all God's Ordinances in Faith and Hope. For it is faith in Christ, and on the Covenant and promises, that will keep you steady and unmovable: that will hold your Souls in Life, and with joy draw water out of the Wells of Salvation, *Esa. 12. 3. Rom. 15. 13.* It is faith and hope that will unite your hearts to Christ and his Promises, and encourage you in your doing and suffering-work, *Rom. 5. 5. 1 Joh. 3. 3.* unbelief holds off, and keeps back mercies from you; but faith and hope draws them to you. You cannot see God in his Worship and Ordinances, but by Faith; neither can you see the beauty, and glorious Excellency of the Promises, Gospel-Ordinances, and Gospel-precepts and obedience to them, but by Faith. You can get no good, no encouragement in the Gospel, and wayes of God, but by faith and hope. Therefore live by Faith and in a well-grounded hope.

(5) Be sure to prepare to meet God in his Worship; and do all you can to get your Hearts ready.

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Do not rush unadvisedly into his Presence; but be sure to do it with much consideration and deliberation. Prepare to meet thy God, Amos. 4. 12. and prepare thy work without, Prov. 24. 27. Get ye Idols out, and get your hearts into a holy frame and disposition for your God and his service: get a holy awe of him on your minds, a deep sense of your wants, weakness, and vileness, and of his greatness, purity and holiness on your hearts; that you may draw nigh unto him with fear and trembling, Heb. 12. 28. Psal. 2. 11. For if you draw nigh to God, without such preparations, be sure you do not, cannot honour and worship him, as God; neither will he meet you and bless you.

6. To conclude: let me request you to cleave to the Lord with full purpose of heart, Act. 11. 23. Walk with God, and serve him in sincerity and Truth, Joshua. 24. 14. Be you alwayes able to say with Paul and other Saints; that your rejoycing is this, the Testimony of your Consciences: that in simplicity and Godly sincerity, you have your Conversations, 2 Cor. 1. 12. Be you much in your closet-work; I mean in secret Prayer, Meditation and Examination, and make what earnings you can of these Duties and Priviledges. Let your Hearts be set on things above, and not on worldly things, Col. 3. 2. cling to Christ in Love, and keep your Affections warm and lively for him. Converse much with Christ, his Love, Grace, Death, and with his Resurrection and Intercession; with his Laws, Promises and Dispensations, and with the fulness of grace he hath received for you. Acquaint your selves with your future glory, and consider much, what you shall be hereafter. (I jumble many things together, for brevity

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brevity sake.) By these and other Means and Duties, you will glorifie God and profit your own Souls: you will rejoyce my heart, and engage me to bless God for you; and the fruits of all will appear in your walkings in the Church, as becomes the Gospel of Christ. Finally my Brethren, will you grant me these few reasonable Requests? Truly, I desire them of you for your own good and Christ's honour, because you are exceeding dear to me, and I do entirely love you, and sincerely seek your present and eternal happiness: I shall present you with a few Considerations, and so conclude.

(1) Consider, that you are a holy People in Name and Profession, and a happy People in Priviledges and Dignities. And therefore you must walk and carry your selves answerable to them.

(2) Consider, the time when you were built up a spiritual house: Was it not in the Sickness-Year, (in the beginning of the Year) : even then, when God was about to cut down Scores of Thousands round about you, and when he was ready to make great devastations in this City, by the Plague? Are you not as Brands pluckt out of the Fire, and continued in your Church-state, in the midst of devouring judgments; that you might be a peculiar People unto God?

(3) Consider, how wonderfully the Lord hath preserved and continued your Priviledges and Mercies to you, and that in very Evil times and places, when many of your Brethren have lost theirs: and wherefore he hath dealt so graciously with you, and whether you have answered his Ends in reality and truth?

(4) Con-

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(4) Consider, your solemn Engagement, when you entered into, and became Members of the Church. Did you not engage to walk with God therein; wait on and constantly celebrate the Service, Ordinances and Worship of his House, and perform your respective Duties to one another? And have you done so? The vows of God are on you, and therefore you had need look to your selves, and consider your wayes.

(5) Consider, what Enjoyments and Communion with God you have had, since your embodying together, and growing up into a Temple in the Lord: and what earnings and improvements you have made of them? what growth in grace and encreasing with the encrease of God? what have been the Fruits of all, to the glory of God, the profit of your own and others Souls?

(6) Consider, what esteem your Lord and King hath of you, and what honours he hath conferred upon you? he hath made you a House or Temple of Kings and Priests, and he hath set you near himself, Rev. 5. 10. Eph. 2. You are the holy Temple and Household of God, the Palace and Gallery of the great King; and you are his Habitation and Garden, wherein he walks and dwells with great delight. He honours you with his special Presence, (if you walk with and please him) and he calls you by his own Name. You are his glory, joy and Crown, and he glories in you. You are exceeding dear to him, and pretious in his account, and you are entrusted with his Richest Treasures. And therefore consider.

(7) What he may and doth require of, and expect from you? you know, that where much is given, much is required and expected; and you know

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know how to apply it to your selves.

(8.) Consider what you shall be hereafter, and what is now preparing for you in Heaven? You have your Race to run, and you have a great prize to win, 1 Cor. 9. You have a Wilderness to go thro-
row, and a Heavenly Canaan to possess. You are now to fight the good Fight of Faith, 1 Tim. 6. 12. and you shall be Crowned in the end, 2 Tim. 4. 7, 8. Now you are to Sow in Tears, that you may Reap in Joy; and now you are to sow and gather Fruit unto Eternal Life, Joh. 4. 36. and hereafter you shall Reap Life everlasting, Gal. 6. 8. Your Head and King is gone to Heaven to take possession for you, and make ready Mansions of Glory for your Reception and Entertainment, Joh. 14. 2, 3. He will not fail to come again in glorious State and Triumph, to fetch you home unto himself, and to present you spotless and glorious before his Father with exceeding joy. Because he lives, namely, at his Fathers right hand in eternal glory, you shall live there also, and you shall be ever with the Lord, Joh. 14. 3, 19. Math. 25. 32, 33, 34. 1 Thes. 4. 16, 17. Eph. 5. Jude 24. You are now of the Church Militant; shortly you shall be of, and with the Church Triumphant. You are entitled to an Eternal Inheritance, and shortly you shall be put into the peaceable and joyful possession of it, as soon as you are of full Age. Your Names are now enrolled among the general Assembly of Believers, and Church of the First-born, written in Heaven, Heb. 12. 23. But it will not be long ere you shall be taken in among that Heavenly and Glorious Society, where you shall see and know as you are known, 1 Cor. 13. 1 Joh. 3. What you would (now) apply these things unto
your

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your selves, and rejoyce in the faith and hope of them, 1 Pet. 1. 8. Oh that you would be looking for, and hastening to that blessed Hope, and glorious Appearance of your great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, Tit. 2. 13. 2 Pet. 3. 12. Oh that you would be stedfast and unmovable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord, 1 Cor. 15. ult. Now is your working-time, hereafter you shall have a rewarding and resting time. The one is very short, the other Eternal. Oh consider! how fast your glass is running out, and how near you may be at your Journeys end? how gray hairs are coming on you, and what a great change Death will shortly make among you? The Lord Jesus is at work for you in Heaven, and you lye deep in his heart and dearest Affections. He will send you many Love-Letters by the holy Spirit, that shall ravish and greatly rejoyce your hearts; if you carry your selves dutifully to, and walk pleasantly before him. He will open the richest Treasures of his Love and Grace unto you, and cause his fountain of pleasures to flow in upon your Souls; and after a little while, he will instate you into, and give you an Eternal weight of glory, 2 Cor. 4. 17. Oh, that I might so run as to obtain! so Preach, Walk, and Minister unto you, as to make you fat and flourishing in the House of God, and approve my self a faithful Steward of the mysteries of God to you! Oh that you, who are Ruling Elders and Deacons, and are honoured with noble Works and Offices in his House, would carefully, diligently, faithfully, and profitably mind your work, and do your duty there; and that all the Members would mind and practise their works
and

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and duties also! O what a happy and renowned Church would you (then) be! and what peace you might obtain to your selves thereby? Oh! what advantages and opportunities have you all to honour Christ, convince the World, profit your own Souls, and be useful to one another? which I do once more entreat you to consider and lay to heart, and so walk as to obtain the ends of your Church-state and privileges. And in order thereunto, pray read this Book over and over again, and that with a single eye, and unprejudicate minds. Read, and ponder well what you read. Read, and pray for a Blessing from Heaven on your hearts; and Read, that you may know and practise your Duties therein held forth, not that you may find matters to cavil at, and except against. Receive and use this Book as a Pledge and Testimony of my true and unfeigned Love & Respects to you, & an evidence of my Cordial desires and intentions to promote the everlasting welfare of your Souls. Brethren I call Heaven and Earth to witness, That in all my ministrations to you, in all my writings and doings for and with you, I do heartily, earnestly, and unfainedly seek and design your present and eternal Good; your Peace and Unity, your Comfort and Holiness, your Growth and Stability in the Grace and Truths of Christ; and that you may be a Glorious Temple of God, and a Church of Renown for Fruitfulness and Spirituality; for Peace, Concord, and true Holiness, Oh! how do I desire it, and long to see it! And know, that what is wanting in my Ability to do you Service, shall be made up in Diligence, Love, and Faithfulness, while I live.

And now Brethren, I commend you to God,
and

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and to the Word of his Grace, which is able
to build you up, and to give you an Inheritance
among all them that are Sanctified. *And shall
remain for ever,*

Yours in the Lord Jesus,
to Love and Serve to his power,

S. F.

A

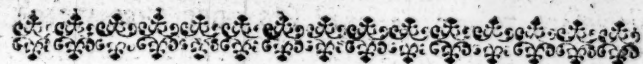
ERRATA.

Candid Reader,

*Thou wilt find many faults committed by the Press,
which I do entreat thy Wisdom to Correct,
and thy Charity to pardon, seeing they are not
the Authors: The chief are these,*

PAge 17. line 2. read *suffragia*, p. 20. l. 19. f. either. r. other, p. 29. l. 34. f. now r. own, p. 41. l. 17. r. rooted, p. 44. l. 9. f. that r. yer, p. 45. l. 5. f. if r. that, p. 63. l. 12. put out *wih*, p. 64. r. Chapt. 4. p. 88. l. 35. r. gravity, p. 121. l. 18. r. and, p. 124. l. 34. f. them r. you, p. 145. l. 31. r. back-bite, p. 150. l. 32. after in r. and, p. 177. l. 18. r. have, p. 201. l. 1. r. handed, p. 226. put cause out of l. 7. and r. it in l. 9. p. 236. l. 14. f. in r. about, before to r. is, p. 238. l. 6. f. and r. as, p. 243. l. 2. r. and, p. 249. l. 7. r. careless, p. 258. l. 1. r. and, p. 270. l. 1. f. to r. for, p. 271. l. 35. f. but r. for, p. 308. l. 10. f. of r. and, p. 310. l. 11. after and put in *thar*, p. 314. l. 23. r. the, l. 35. f. *cor-*tinued, r. confirmed, p. 315. l. 19, r. to, p. 320. l. 9. r. smell.

THE
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A
GOSPEL-CHURCH:
 OR,
GOD'S Holy Temple.

A brief Discourse of
 A New-Testament CHURCH.

from Ephes. 2. 19, 20, 21, 22.

Now therefore ye are no more Strangers and Foreigners, but fellow-Citizens with the Saints, and of the household of God, and are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets; Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-Stone: In whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy Temple in the Lord: In whom you also are builded together for an Habitation of God, through the Spirit.



Ur Apostle having shewed the believing *Ephesians* what they were before their Regeneration and Conversion to Christ, in the 1, 2, 3, 5, 11, 12. verses; he proceeds to shew them their present state and condition (with the efficient, meritorious and instrumental causes thereof.) And first, he shews them what they are not *vers. 19. Now*
 B *there-*

therefore ye are no more (as once you were) Strangers and Forreigners. 2ly. What they now were, in what state and condition. 1. You are (saith he) fellow-Citizens, (and that) with the Saints. 2. And of the household or family of God. 3. You are in a happy and secure state, for you are not built (says he) upon your own sandy foundation, but upon the Rock of Ages: namely, 1. The Covenant of Grace, the Doctrine of the Apostles and Prophets. 2. On Jesus Christ the chief Corner-Stone, vers. 20. The only foundation laid by God the Father and God the Son, which by Them was laid before the world was, 1. Cor. 3. 11. Math. 16. 18. 2 Tim. 1. 9. Tit. 1. 2. and which is sufficiently able to uphold, support and secure all that build and bear themselves upon it.

In the Text, you have an account of the matter and form of a temple, habitation, or a particular Church of God; together with the maker and builder thereof. First, The matter or materials wherewith God builds him a house to dwell in. 1. They are quickened and enlivened persons; vers. 5. 2. They are Gods workmanship, recreated or regenerated in Christ Jesus unto good works, vers. 10. 3. They are brought nigh to God by Christ his blood, vers. 13. 4. They are built upon Christ Jesus and the Covenant of Grace, vers. 20. 5. They are fellow-Citizens with the Saints and of the household of God: (that is, of the Invisible Catholick Church of Christ) vers. 19. Secondly, The form. 1. They are said to be fully framed or formed together, vers. 21. That is, these materials are joyned or glewed together into a house or body, *Εν ᾧ πᾶσα ἡ ἐκκλησία*

Ἰσχυρὰ συνάγει· οὐκ ὀρθῶς. *In quo totum edificium congruenter coagmentatum: (Beza)* you are congruently and rightly laid into the building, and so become an excellent and comely fabrick or house of God. 2. They are said to be *built for a Habitation, viz.* Ἐν ᾧ καὶ ὑμεῖς οὖν οἰκοδομεῖσθε. 3. You have an account of the *Former and builder*, or the Agent employed in the work of building a holy Temple or Church of God; and that is the *Holy Ghost, vers. 21.* Now this he doth, 1. By fitting and preparing materials: It is not the work of men or Angels to make men fit matter for a Church or Temple of God, but it is the work of the omnipotent Spirit. It is his work, and in the power of his hand only to quicken the dead, to enlighten the blind; to translate men out of the kingdom of Satan, and bring them into Christ's. 2. He doth it, by shewing them their duty, and the way to it; by making their hearts willing, and leading them in the way wherein they should go. 3. By giving them Laws and Rules to walk by. 4. By stirring up his Ministers hearts and tongues to move and perswade them to it. 4thly. We have here one of the great ends of the Spirit his building of Churches, and that is *for a habitation for God to dwell in: As God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them.* 2 Cor. 6. 16. Psal. 132. 14. Rev. 2. 1.

And as these things are here expressed, so there are many things implied and included, which are not exprest: as, the Laws, orders and ordinances of a house of God: the duty of all Believers to joyn themselves to some Church of Christ, as they have opportunity;

and their duties there : as likewise, the profit and advantage that will accrue to them in that state ; and the priviledge and honour of it, and the glory and honour of Christ ; and several things that I shall discourse on in my proceedings. God doth not set up Churches to stand empty and Idle , only to have a name and to be gazed on ; but he hath instituted, appointed and erected them for his Name, Honour and Glory in the world, and for the Soul-profit and benefit of his people : that they should walk with him, and He with them : that they should obey and honour him, and he supply and enrich them with his grace ; and for other glorious ends and purposes which shall be discoursed of, the Lord assisting.

CHAP. I.

Of an Instituted Gospel-Church, and the Extent thereof.

MY purpose and design is to discourse only of a particular instituted Gospel-Church : and in my proceedings, I shall not concern my self with any Mens conceptions of a Church in any other sense ; but keep close to the subject or Church under consideration, without meddling with the controversies that are amongst learned men in their different apprehensions of Churches and their concernments. For as I desire (and hope I may without offending any) to have liberty to declare and practise my own light, faith and perswasion in these

these things ; so, I think it most reasonable to leave others to their own perswasions, expressions and practice in these matters, without any Reflexions.

It is the profit of such as I am concern'd with all that I aim at ; and I judge my self obliged in duty to make known the whole will of God to those I have the oversight of, according to my Light, Abilities, and Opportunities, and that by all the regular ways and means I can find out and obtain the knowledge of : And it is for them that I chiefly intend these Lines, although they may probably fall into other mens hands.

Therefore, waving the thoughts of men, I shall proceed to acquaint you (who shall read this discourse) with the will of God in this matter, so far as I know & believe, and as may be profitable for you ; which I shall do by way of *Question* and *Answer*.

1. *Quest.* What is a true Instituted Gospel-Church ?

Answ. A true Instituted Gospel-Church is, a Society or Congregation of persons called out of the world, or their state of death, blindness and unbelief, by the Word and Spirit of Christ ; to the knowledge of Christ and his will, and unto the Obedience of faith : or, A company of Believers united together in a holy Band, by special and voluntary agreement ; who by the grace and power of Christ in their hearts under the conviction of their duty, do give up themselves to the Lord, and to one another by the will of God ; to live and walk together as Saints, in love, peace, and in the constant

stant celebration; and practice of all the Laws and worship of Christ; and in the observation of all his Gospel-Ordinances, in Obedience to his Holy Will, for his Glory and their own Spiritual profit, *Rom. 1. 5, 6. 2 Cor. 8. 5. Heb. 3. 1. 1 Pet. 2. 5. Eph. 2. 21, 22. 2 Cor. 4. 6. 1 Pet. 2. 9. Eph. 2. 1. 5. Col. 2. 6. 2 Thes. 1. 5.*

This Church, so united and built, is called a Church, a House, a Temple, Habitation of God and Jesus Christ; and they own it as their own, call it by their own Names, and confirm it with their Presence in it. And as such a Church, it is the proper seat and subject of all the Gospel-worship and ordinances of Christ in the world, as will appear in the other Chapters; and therefore I shall not insist on it here. Onely take these few hints of this Church, along with you.

1. It is an Instituted Church of Jesus Christ; namely a Church of his own appointment and erection; of his own making, and forming, according to his own will and pleasure, by his own Authority and Approbation.

2. The materials or persons constituting this Church are said to be holy persons, called out of their old worldly state of death, blindness and unbelief, unto the knowledg (that is, the saving knowledg) of Christ and his will, and unto the Obedience of Faith.

3. The Instruments that call them and work them for this state; and that is the Word and Spirit of Christ.

4. The form of this Church; namely their own free, special and voluntary agreement among

among themselves, giving themselves to the Lord (before each other) and then to one another by the will of God: entering into a holy band or Engagement, to live and walk together, (through divine assistance) in Love, peace, and in the celebration and practice of all the Laws, worship and ordinances of Christ in the Church; in obedience to his holy Will.

5. The ends of their so doing, namely, the Glory of Christ and their own spiritual profit. These are some of the chiefest things to be observed in this definition of an Instituted Gospel-Church: All which I shall (through God's help) prove and demonstrate hereafter, under several heads.

2. *Quest. Of what Extent should an Instituted Gospel-Church be; or, how many persons should it consist of?*

Answ. It should be formed of so many persons as may capacitate them to perform all necessary-Church Acts, in pursuance of Christ's Laws and Rules, by which the Society ought to walk: *Mat.* 18. 15, 16, 17. and of no more than may conveniently meet together in one place, for the celebration of all Gospel-Ordinances, and the Edification of the whole Church. Now, How many persons (precisely) are requisite to make and constitute such a formal Church, I cannot determine: but undoubtedly, there ought to be such a number, as may orderly and regularly deal with and proceed against a delinquent-member, according to that Rule in *Mat.* 18. And as the Church should consist of so many, so it should have no more persons in it, then (as was said) may

comfortably and conveniently meet or assemble together for the worship of God, and profit of the whole Church, in one place: and that (1.) because they are one congregation by their own consent and agreement, and so ought not to divide and separate themselves one from another in the worship and ordinances of God, but there (at the same times) *with one heart and one mouth, glorify God, Rom. 15. 6.* (2) Because the whole Church is bound at all times (excepting extraordinary cases) to wait and attend on the administration of their own Officers, by virtue of Christs Law, *Heb. 13. 17.* enjoying them so to do, and also by virtue of their own engagement and relation they stand in to them. (3) For their own comfort and edification, in the Church and ordinances of God. This is one of the great ends of Churches, and the worship and ordinances of God there, namely, the profit and edification of all, *1 Cor. 14. 3, 31.* But how can it be, unless they can all hear, and joyn one with another, in the ordinances? (4) Because a Church ought to observe ordinances, and worship God as a Church, and not as, or under the notion of single and individual Believers; but, as an united Body and society they must all at once, and in the same numerical duties and ordinances, in one place, joyn together as with one Heart, Mouth, Mind and Judgment; designing, aiming at, and carrying on the same holy Ends in all the worship of God. Therefore a Church of Christ may not exceed such a number of members, as may conveniently meet altogether in one place, *1 Cor. 5. 4.* But I shall not enlarge on this head.

CHAP. II.

Shewing that a particular Church of Believers is of divine Institution.

3. **Q**uestion. *Whether particular Churches of Believers be of divine Institution; or whether they be of God.*

Ans. They are appointed and Instituted of God, by Jesus Christ: which will appear in or by these particulars.

First, The Scripture tells us, that the Spirit is the *former and builder* of them. The *Text* is clear for it, *in whom you also are builded together, for an habitation of God, through the Spirit, vers. 22.* These are the words of Christ (by *Paul*) unto the particular congregational Church of the believing *Ephesians*, as is clear in the 20 Chapter of the *Acts*, 27, 28. *Rev. 2. 1.* Where the Lord Jesus calls them a distinct Household, Church or Body of Saints, gathered or joyned together in his name, for his glory, the celebration of his worship, ordinances and appointments: I say, Christ styles them a Church, and speaks to them as a Church and distinct Body or house of Saints, from all other persons or Churches whatsoever: and this Church was not formed and built by man, but by the will, power, light and direction of the Holy Ghost; & therefore the particular congregational Church of Ephesus, is called the *House of God*, 1 *Tim. 3. 15.* and the *Church of the living God* in the same vers. and the distinct particular Churches, are called the *Churches of God.*

God, 1 Cor. 11. 16. 2 Thes. 1. 4. 2 Cor. 1. 1. and the Churches of Christ, Rom. 16. 16. Act. 20. 28. And the Lord added to the particular Church at Jerusalem, such as should be saved: Act. 2. ult. The holy Spirit by the appointment and with the consent and Authority of God the Father and Christ his Son, who is also God blessed for ever, Rom. 9. 5. prepares materials for a Church, and then he joyns them together, and makes them a holy and glorious Temple or Church of God, Eph. 2. 21, 22. and Chap. 5. 27. So that we have enough to confirm this Truth, (viz.) that particular Churches of Believers are of God, in this one particular, namely, Because God himself is the former and builder of them, Mat. 16. 18. Isa. 43. 21.

*Secondly, It further appears by the Lord's owning of them, promising and vouchsafing his presence with them: which he would never do if they were not of his Institution and appointment. But now the Lord declares his owning of, and promises his presence and abode with them, as his Churches. Jesus Christ doth not only (by his Spirit) prepare and fit men for this state, build them up and stamp his own and his Father's name upon them; but also he dwells in them, and makes them his walks, palaces and places of his delight: Here (says he) will I dwell, for I have desired it; Psal. 135. 14. yea these Churches are his chosen and most pleasant habitations, Psal. 132. 13. where he rests, and reposes himself, v. 14. and that for ever: not, to look on or visit them now and then, but to rest himself, and dwell there for ever: not
for*

for a few days, but for ever. And in *Rev. 2. 1.* the Lord Jesus tells the Church at *Ephesus*, that *he walked in the midst of the seven Golden Candlesticks*; which were the seven distinct, particular, and congregational Churches, *Rev. 1. 20.* and in the *2 Cor. 9. 16.* (says he) *I will dwell in them and walk in them*: that is, in the particular Church at *Corinth*. Now, particular congregational Churches are of God, or Men, but they cannot be of mens devising and setting up, because God owns them and confirms them with his presence; desires, and chuses them for his Rest, and dwells in them continually with delight and complacency; and therefore they must be of God: for, the great and holy God will not own the devices of men in and about his name and worship, but abhors and loaths them, condemns and rejects them as filthy and abominable things, *Lev. 10. 2 Sam. 6.* and much less will he delight and rest in them.

Thirdly, That particular congregational-Churches of Believers are of divine Institution, is further evinced and confirmed, by the constant and universal practice of Believers in the Apostles daies: for, no sooner were any Jews or Gentiles converted to Christ, but as soon as they had opportunity, they joyned to, or congregated into, Churches. So *Acts 2. 41, 42.* it is said, that *they were daily added to the Church, vers, 47.* and *Acts 5. 14.* This is evident in the places where the Apostles preached amongst the Jews and Gentiles, and the Gospel was received, that as soon as a number were converted, they congregated, as being the first

first work they were to do after they had received Christ Jesus the Lord. Col. 2. 6. and ever after they were called Churches of Christ and Temples of God; a multitude of them you read of in the *Acts*, *Epistles* of Paul, and in the *Revelation*. And what they did therein, was by the doctrine and advice of the Apostles, and according to what they taught them, from and in the name of Christ, 1 Cor. 11. 23. 2 Pet. 1. ult. Now, what they did and practised by Apostolical direction, and with the approbation of Jesus Christ, hath the binding force and power of a divine precept, 1 Cor. 11. 1. Heb. 6. 12. It was the universal practice of the primitive Saints, to joyn themselves to some Church of Christ; insomuch, that we can hardly find any one of them continuing out of a Church-state any time, after their conversion. We seldome read (in divine histories) of any believers, but what had relation to one Church or other, planted and watered by the *Apostles* or *Evangelists*, 1 Cor. 3. 6. By which said universal practice we may conclude, that particular Churches of Believers are of Gods owne Institution. For the Saints of God durst not do then, as many dare do now, namely, to live in the willful neglect of so great a Duty and priviledg; the love and fear of God, and the will of Christ, easily perswaded them to give up themselves unto Christ in universal obedience unto his whole revealed will. And they could not congregate and joyn into Churches, nor abide and worship God in them in faith and obedience unless they had known that what they did therein, was the will of Christ, and their duty. Fourthly,

Fourthly, This Truth is further confirmed, by the *Laws, Rules, and Orders, that Jesus Christ hath given to his Churches, as Churches, and not as to individual and single Believers.* Almost all the *Epistles of Paul* are written for, and directed to Believers as in church and incorporated into bodies and distinct congregations: and he directs his *Epistles* to them under the stile and Title of Churches, *To the Church of God which is at Corinth*, 1 Cor. 1. 2. and *To the Church of the Thessalonians*, 1 Thes. 1. 1. In which *Epistles*, are all the *Laws, Rules and Orders*, for all the members of the Churches walking and practice, contained: (which shall be afterwards opened, when I come to speak of the duties of Churches) and the *Epistles of Paul to Timothy* are written and sent to him, to direct him *how to behave himself in the House of God*, and to shew him what his work and duty was in the Church: 1 Tim. 3, 14, 15. So other *Epistles* are given to the Churches, that they might know how to behave themselves in that state and Relation. There are *Rules and Laws* for their faith and Love, and orders for their walkings and practices. There they are Instructed and taught how to carry themselves towards God the Father, and Jesus Christ their Head and Ruler, towards their *Pastors and Teachers*, and towards one another as fellow-Members. There they have laid down their particular works and duties towards God and Men, and shewed how they should perform them; as also, motives and encouragements to move and quicken them to diligence and faithfulness in the practice of them. And although all

all sorts of duties are there laid down and commanded, namely, such as respect other Relations and Capacities, as of husband and wife, parents and children, &c. yet the chief and great end, matter and scope of them, are intended for them as Believers in a Church-state and Relation, as will further appear when I come to speak of the special and particular duties of Church Members, as such.

Now then, if God hath given his Laws, Rules and Orders unto Churches, or to Believers as in a Church state and condition, for their holy and regular walking towards God and one another, as in that relation; then undoubtedly, particular congregated Churches of Believers are of God, and of divine Institution: For surely the holy and jealous God would never so far own and privilege the devices and Institutions of men in matters that so nearly concern his worship and Glory, as to dignify them with his holy Laws and Ordinances; as he hath done to his own Churches, that are of his own Institution and appointment.

Fifthly, This Truth is further ratified and confirmed, by the Officers he hath given to them, for their well-being, ordering and managing of Church-affairs and concerns, in his name, for his glory and their profit. These Officers are specified and enumerated in Eph. 4. 11. 1 Cor. 12. 28. Phil. 1. 1. 1 Tim. 3. 1. Tim. 5. 17. and elsewhere; as in Acts 20. 17, &c. And they are not given by men, but, God: authorized & impowred by him to act and officiate as such in the Church, 1 Cor. 12. 28. *God hath set them in his Church.* And Acts 20. 28. (says Paul

Paul to the Elders of the Church at Ephesus ;)
Take heed to your selves and to the Church over
which the holy Ghost hath made you Overseers, or
ἐπισκόπους, ad pascendam Ecclesiam Dei, to
feed the Church of God: And in Eph. 4. 11.
he (that is, Christ, vers. 10.) gave Pastors and
Teachers, for the work of the Ministry, vers. 11.
 And as they are given, authorized and sent of
 God, or set by him in the Churches; so he
 hath allotted and appointed them their severall
 distinct works and businesses there, and char-
 ged them to take heed and see they do it, as he
 appoints: *Acts 20. 17, 18. Rom. 12. 7, 8.*
Heb. 13. 17. 1 Tim. 5. 17. and takes special
 care about their qualifications for their work,
1 Tim. 3. Tit. 1. yea, he gives and bestows
 Gifts and abilities, himself, on them, for the
 Churches sakes, that they may be able ministers
 of the New-Testament; not of the letter only,
 but of the Spirit; and promises to be with
 them, himself, in all their endeavours, to
 discharge their Trust, and perform their works,
Eph. 4. Rom. 12. Mat. 28. ult. and will bless
 and prosper their labours to his Glory and the
 Churches benefit.

Now assuredly, God would never have made
 such provisions, for Churches of humane Inven-
 tion, and setting up: he would never so far
 own the works of mens hands, without his
 mind, Authority & appointment; and therefore
 seeing God hath provided and set Officers in
 them, appointed them their works, qualified &
 fitted them by his Spirit; & promised to be with
 them; particular Churches of Believers, must
 be of divine Institution; of God, & not of men.

Sixthly,

Sixthly, This further appears, by the order and discipline Christ hath appointed, and required to be observed and practised in his Churches. He hath appointed and given Officers unto them (as before-said), and to them hath he committed the use, exercise and power of the Keys, to open and shut his door; to execute his Laws, and to manage his concernments and household-affairs therein: namely, in his Name, and by the Authority he hath given them for that end and purpose; and he hath charged the Churches to Obey and submit themselves to them in the Lord, in the exercising of their power and Authority in his name, to his Glory and the Churches profit, according to his direction, *Heb. 13. 7, 17. 1 Thes. 5. 12*. These Officers or Elders, have the power and Authority of Christ in their hands, to correct offenders, to instruct, admonish and reprove; and, in case of obstinacy, to cast them out, or remove them from their membership in the Churches, (with the Church's suffrage) and upon Repentance to receive them in again, *Mat. 16. 18, 19. 1 Cor. 5. 4, 5. 7, 12, 13. 2 Cor. 2*. The neglect of which, Christ reproves the Churches of *Asia* for, *Rev. 2. 14, 20*. And as the Churches have, by their Elders, the orders and discipline of Christ, with power and Authority to use and exercise the same; so, each particular Church hath power to chuse and appoint Officers for themselves, namely, such as they judge the Lord Jesus hath appointed and fitted for them: such as he offers and presents to them and gives a place and interest in their hearts, *Acts 14. 23. Acts. 6. 3.* Xηρο-
τοιμασις

τοὐσάντες δὲ αὐτοῖς πρεσβυτέρῃς καὶ ἑκκλησίαις.
Quumque ipis per susfragia creassent per singulas
Ecclesias (Beza); a Church may Authoritative-
 ly do that which Believers cannot so do in a
 single and individual capacity, as Believers;
 but they may as a congregated Body, and as
 an incorporated society, who have voluntarily
 given up themselves, and engaged to one ano-
 ther, & to Jesus Christ by the Will of God, to sub-
 mit to, & walk together by the same Laws and
 Rules of the Society or Corporation: These
 have not singly, but joyntly as a Corporation,
 the power and exercise of discipline. *When ye*
are come together, deliver such a one to Satan,
in the Name of the Lord Jesus, 1 Cor. 5. 4. and
if he will not hear thee, tell it to the Church,
 &c. Mat. 16. So then if Christ hath given
 Rules, laws and power of order and discipline
 to particular congregated Churches of Belie-
 vers, then they are of divine Institution. And
 indeed spiritual discipline cannot elsewhere be
 rightly exercised.

Seventhly, This Truth is further confirmed,
 by their names and honourable Titles. God the
 Father, and Jesus Christ his Son, calls them by
 their own names, and so owns them for their
 own Churches; 1 Cor. 3. 16, 17. *Know ye not*
that ye are the Temple of God; If any man defile
the Temple of God, him shall God destroy: for the
Temple of God is holy, which Temple ye are. So
 2 Cor. 6. 16. And as Jesus Christ honours them
 with the high stile and Title of his holy Temple,
 so also his Habitation, Eph. 2. 22. and his
 Household, Eph. 2. 19. as also the Household of
 Faith; Gal. 6. 10. And further he intitles
 C them

them his Churches, or the Churches of God, and Christ, and golden Candlesticks: *Rev. 1. 20. Rom. 16. 16. 1 Cor. 11. 16. 2 Thes. 1. 4.* And that in allusion to the old Temple, and Candlesticks thereof, which were of his own appointment. Moreover a particular congregated Church of Believers, is called the *House of God*, *1 Tim. 3. 5. 15. Heb. 3. 5, 6.* and Christ his *Walks*, *Rev. 2. 1.*

These were particular Congregational Churches that he thus owns, and honours with such Titles; (*viz*) the particular Churches of *Ephesus, Corinthians, Thessalonians.*

Eightly, Believers as in church or incorporated Bodies, are spoken to by name, the great discoveries made of Gods purposes and intended works in the latter daies, are directed and given to them by the Spirit. Hence it is often said in the *Revelations*; *he that hath an Ear let him hear*, *what the Spirit saith unto the Churches*; which were distinct incorporated Bodies and Societies of Believers, *Rev. 2. 7, 17, 29. Rev. 3. 6, 13, 22.*

The Holy Ghost reveals to them, the *vice, name, nature, and works of Antichrist*; what he should be, and what he should do; from whence he should come, what he should do to the Churches, Temple and beloved City of God, and what his end should be. There he describes the *New Jerusalem*, and Church-state of Gods People, and what he would do with and for them. There they are shewed largely and abundantly, the care and Love of Christ to his People, of the warr and conflicts that shall be between the Dragon, Beasts, Whore, false Prophet;

Prophet; and Jesus Christ and his followers; as also the Issue of all: as you may find in that book of the Revelations. All which shews, that particular Churches of Believers are of God. For the Holy Spirit would never own the Inventions of men so farr as to make known to them such great things, as he there declares unto the Churches.

Nimbly, If particular congregational Churches had not been of divine Institution, but of mens devising; then surely Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit would have sharply reprov'd them for their setting up their posts by Gods posts, as he did the Jews, Ezek. 43. 8. and as he reprov'd them for their miscarriages in their Church-state, Rev. 2. 3. and the Corinthians and Galatians, &c. But we never find them reprov'd or found fault withal for their being in church'd and incorporated into distinct congregations, but they are often Commended for it, Act. 2. Col. 2. 5. For men to set up Churches, Temples and Houses, to be the seats and subjects of Gods Ordinances and Worship, and then to entile the name & Authority of Jesus Christ to them, had been a most high and presumptuous wickedness indeed, and such as he would never have winck'd at, but abhorred and rejected them, as mens works. Therefore particular congregated Churches of Believers are of God; for if they had not, he would undoubted have severely reprov'd them for their so walking.

Tenthly, These congregational Churches must needs be of God; because without such, the worship and ordinances of God cannot regularly & order-

*ly be observed and performed by men, in a solemn, fixed and publique stated way and manner; neither can the pastors & overseers of them rightly and comfortably perform their work, and administer the ordinances of Christ to men. For all that are privileged with Christ his Institutes, and profess to own him for their Lord and Saviour, ought to live under his Government and discipline, and to subject themselves to all the orders and Appointments of Christ, and to own and give up themselves to the guidance and Rule of such as he hath set over them; and their Teachers and Elders are to take care of, watch over and duely administer to such as Christ hath committed to their care, inspection and charge: Now how can they do it unless they are fixed, formed and known Churches or Congregations: unless they have mutually chosen each other to walk together in their several places and capacities as a stated Church or Family of God? How can they be overseers of Churches, and take care of them as such, as Christ commands them, *Act. 20. 17, 28.* unless they are first Churches, and declare themselves to be such unto their Guides, that they may take the care and charge of, and administer to them as Churches of Christ? If their officers are stated, fixed officers to them, then they must be stated, fixed Churches to their officers. How else shall they know who are their flocks, their care and charge, and who are not? who they are bound to over-see and minister too, as their own peculiar flocks? what they are to do, give or receive, to or from them? or how to discharge their ministerial work*

work unto them, and give an account of them unto their Lord and Master; unless they are incorporated Societys, who have engaged to walk together as Churches, in all Christs-Ordinances, and chosen them to administer to them in the name of Christ, and by his Authority? And how can they administer Church-Ordinances unto them as Church-Officers unless they are, and they own and approve of them as the Churches of Christ; and believe that they are set there by Christ, as Church-Officers, to officiate for him as such, to his Churches as Churches? what Authority can they claim over them, unless with their own mutual consent they acknowledge and own each other as Churches and Officers of Christ, to and in them? How can they administer the *Lords Supper* to them, authoritatively, require their attendance on their administrations, and reprove their neglects: and how can their *Teachers* preach to them *with all Authority*: How can they watch over and feed them and expect their Love, Duty, and Subjection, and how can they exercise the power of the Keys, and administer censures, to and amongst them, unless they are related to one another as Officers and Churches? Ministers are charged to take care of their own flocks, *Act. 20. 17, 28.* and to behave themselves so and so in the House of God committed to their Trust, *1 Tim. 3. 5, 15.* and such are pronounced Blessed, *Mat. 24, 25, 26, 27.* Who then (says Christ) is a Faithful and Wise Steward, or Servant, whom his Lord hath made Ruler over his Household, to give them meat in due Season? Blessed is that Servant, &c.

These are some of the many Reasons and demonstrations, that might be given, to shew that particular congregated Churches of Believers are of God and not of men. I might have added as many more to evince and confirm it; but these may be sufficient to satisfy the Faith and Consciences of, and encourage Believers in their walking in Church fellowship, or congregating into distinct Churches and particular Societies.

CHAP. III.

Of the matter of a Gospel-Church, or the materials of Gods Holy Temple.

4. **Q**uestion, *What are the Materials of a House of God : or how should persons be qualified for Church-fellowship : or who ought to be Church-Members ?*

Ans. Onely regenerate and converted Persons ; such as are married to, and have put on Christ : such as are savingly and powerfully enlightned and enlivened, quickened and convinced of Sin, Righteousnesse and Judgment, *Joh. 16. 8, 9. 2 Cor. 5. 5. Eph. 2. 1, 5.* Such as have chosen Christ for their Lord and Saviour, and resigned and made over themselves to Christ, & received him upon his own Terms, *Col. 2. 6. 1 Cor. 6. 19, 20.* Such onely as are reconciled unto, and are in favour with God ; as are justified by Faith, sanctified by the Spirit, and set a part for Holynesse, and unto *Living to God, and no more unto themselves.* Such as are the beloved of God, called (effectually)

to be Saints, and have really and sincerely taken upon them the Yoke of Christ Jesus. I say such persons, and only such, doth Jesus Christ account meet to be partakers of this priviledge and dignity, *Col. 1. 12.* and to make Heavenly Places, *Eph. 1. 3.* although men do not certainly know them to be such, and by reason of their darknesse and fallable Judgments, they may receive and admit others into Churches, and unto their priviledges and immunities; yet in truth they have no right unto them, and ought not to be there. For these Spiritual-Holy things are for, and only for Spiritual and Holy Men; Heavenly places are for Heavenly Persons, and Spiritual works for Spiritual Men. Now the Churches of Christ are the only Holy, Spiritual and Heavenly places, and the Seats and Subjects of Holy and Heavenly things. Christ prepares men by his Grace, Word and Spirit, to make them fit and meet materials, and then he calls them to joyn together and become a Spiritual House, for his Delight, Service and Glory, *1 Pet. 2. 5.* And therefore such, and only such persons ought to be Members of a Church of Christ; as will appear by these following particulars.

I. Because God threatens, and often declares his detestation and abhorrence of others being there, and manifests his Indignation against them. As to the man that came to the supper without the Wedding Garment, *Matth. 22. 11, 12, 13.* Then said the King to his Servants, bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer Darknesse, *Isa. 33. 14.* The Sinners in Zion are afraid, fearfulness hath surprized the Hypocrites;

crites; who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire; who amongst us shall dwell with everlasting Burnings? And the five foolish Virgins, Mat. 25. and the dreadfull end of the Tares, Matth. 13. 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43. which were the Hypocrites that by the Devils instigation crept into the Churches, as in the 2. to the Galatians 4. c. Matth. 13. 38, 39. It is true, that such were and will be in the best Churches, let their Guides do all they can to prevent it, because they cannot make an infallible Judgment of persons states (as was said); and it is as certain, that they are Usurpers, and ought not to be there For although they are by Gods providence permitted to creep in, yet be sure they are not there with his approbation and allowance: *they are not all Israel that are of Israel, Rom. 9. 6.* for saith God to all the uncircumcized, *What have you to do to take my Covenant into your mouth, seeing you hate Instruction and cast my words behind your Back,* (as all Hypocrites do) *Psal. 50. 16, 17.* and Christ says; that such as will not have him to reign over them (and Hypocrites be sure will not) shall be destroyed, *Luke 19. 27.* Now either the Churches of God should consist of Saints and sincere hearted Believers, or of formal hypocritical professors, (as all are that are not prophane men, or real Saints) for all sober men will confesse, that open prophane and debauched persons ought not to be accounted Church Members, while they continue such: not of Hypocrites, because they are the most loathsome and abominable persons in the sight of God, as may be seen at large in the

the 23 *chapt.* of *Matth.* from the 13. *vers.* to the 35. and Christ tells us, *that publicans and harlots should go into the Kingdome of God before them, Matth. 21. 31.* And therefore they should and ought to be sincere-hearted Believers, and none else. I do not say that Churches should account such for Hypocrites, and reject them as such, because they do not certainly know them to be sincere Saints who offer to joyn in fellowship with them: but I only say, that Hypocrites have no right unto, neither ought they to presse into the Holy Churches of Christ: for all the New-Testament Churches should consist onely of New Creatures, and real Members of Jesus Christ.

2. That all Church-members ought to be sincere hearted Believers, appears, by the high Titles that the Lord Jesus gives unto the Members of his Churches in the Scripture. He calls them not his Copper, but his *Golden Candlesticks*, *Rev. 1. 20.* So David describes the Spouse of Christ, *Psal. 45. 13.* *The Kings Daughter is all glorious within: her cloathing is of wrought Gold.* So they are called *Saints; holy Brethren and Beloved; elect and called; dear Children of God, and called into the fellowship of his Son, Rom. 1. 7. Col. 3. 12. 2 Thes. 2. 13. Eph. 5. 1. Heb. 3. 1.* And the Apostle Paul tells the Church of the *Thessalonians* that they were such to whom the Gospel came, *not in word only, but also in power, and in the holy Ghost, and in much assurance:* and hence he concludes, that they were the *Elect of God, 1 Thes. 1. 4, 5.* and he tells the *Philippians*, that God had begun a good work in them, and would perfect

felt it, and that not in a few, but in *all* of them, chap. 1. 5, 6. And the Church at Corinth, is called the *Sponse of Christ*, 2 Cor. 11. 2. and the *Temple of God*, 1 Cor. 3. 16, 17. 2 Cor. 6. 16. as also the *Holy Churches of God*, and of *Christ*, (as you heard before), and that the Church of *Ephesus* was formed into a *Holy Temple of God*, and made his *Habitation* by the *Spirit*, Eph. 2. 21, 22. And the Church at *Rome* were the *Children of God*, and *joynt heirs with Christ*, Rom. 8. And *Peter* says, that they were *living stones*, built up a *Spiritual House*, and a *Holy Priesthood*, 1 Pet. 2. 5. and *Paul* tells the *Ephesians*, that they were the *Lords Sealed ones*, that they had the *Spirit of God*, which had *Sealed them up unto the Day of Redemption*, Eph. 1. 13. 4. 30. Now these glorious things that are spoken of the Cities or Churches of God, Psal. 87. 3. such honourable Titles belong not unto meer formal professors, but only unto the real members of Christ; not unto those that have a name only, but to such as are so indeed and in Truth.

3. A third Reason is taken from the ends of Churches, or the ends of God in Instituting and appointing them: I'll name a few. 1. They are said to be built by the Spirit for God, Eph. 2. 21, 22. that is, for God to dwell in them and walk in them: to rest and repose himself in them as in his holy Walkes, Gardens, houses and Temples, 2 Cor. 6. 16. Rev. 2. 1. Psal. 132. 13, 14. For the Lord hath chosen Zion, he hath desired it for his Habitation: this is my rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it: (Oh! that all Church-members would seriously

ously mind this) and in Zeph. 3. 16, 17. it is said: *In that day (speaking of Gospel-times) it shall be said to Jerusalem, fear thou not: and unto Zion, let not thine hands be slack. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty: he will save; he will rejoyce over thee with Joy; he will rest in his Love; he will Joy over thee with Singing.* As men refresh themselves, and delight to be in the House of their dear and hearty Friends and Relations, so doth God in his Churches, and *as the Bridegroom rejoyceth over his Bride, so doth God over & in his own Churches,* Isa. 62. 5. Now then if this be one of the holy ends of God, then surely they must be Churches of holy persons not of Hypocrites, for God *hates and abhors* their presence and services, Isa. 1. 13.---16. Isa. 66. 3. Prov. 15. 8.

2. They are intended and erected by his Spirit and Authority for his Glory in the World. When great Men build stately Houses, it is for their honour and Glory, and to distinguish themselves from others: so when God builds himself a Spiritual House, it is for his Honour and Glory, to distinguish his People from others. Solomon tells God, that he had built God a House to dwell in; and also for his name, 1 Kings 8. 13, 19. (which he did by the Lords appointment and direction) so God appoints and sets up particular Holy Temples by his Spirit, for his name and Glory: that they should be to the praise of his glorious Grace; and be the living Witnesses to his Name, Truths and Ways: that they should be the Habitations of beauty and Glory: of fame and renown in the World, and be the lights therefore; and that with one heart

heart and mouth they should glorify God, Rom.

15. 6 Golden Candlesticks in Princes Courts are set up for their glory, as suitable to their state and dignity: so doth God erect and set up his Golden Candlesticks (the Churches of Believers) for his glory, as having a resemblance of his state and dignity: and it is Gospel-holinesse that becomes his House fore ever, *Psal.* 93. 5. The Messengers of the Churches are said to be *the Glory of Christ*, 2 *Cor.* 8. 23. God calls the Church of the Jews his *Glory*, *Isa.* 46. 13. and that because they were a Church of his own planting, and a Covenant people, and for *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, and the little Remnant sake of Believers that were amongst them, and who glorify him indeed & in Truth. God bestows his Grace, stamps his Image and infuses his Holynesse into men, to meeten them for his Temple and Temple-work; and then formes and sets them up in his own beauty and Glory, in a Church-state; that there, as a Body compact, they may shine forth to his Glory and praise in the World. As many glittering daimonds in a gold Ring, do shine more gloriously upon a mans hand, than a hundred times so many more scattered up and down here and there, would do: so a company of men which are made pretious stones, fitted for a House of God, being well and orderly set in a Church-state or in a House of God, do shine more gloriously there, than many more can do in a single and individual capacity and standing alone, to the honour and glory of God.

3. *God Institutes and builds Believers into Spiritual Houses, for his peoples Spiritual profit and*

and advantage: that God may there *Impart his Loves, Cant. 7. 12.* and communicate his grace Truths and Counsels unto them, as to his a-vowed and publique household and family, *Eph. 2. 19.* Christ *Walkes*, and God the Father *Dwells* there, & the Holy Spirit *Speaks* to them in an especial and frequent manner, *Rev. 2. 1. 2 Cor. 6. 16. Rev. 2. 7. 11, &c.* And assuredly Jesus Christ does not walk, nor God the Father dwell there empty handed, but distributes plentifully of their Love and fullness. As great princes where they go and lodge, they will give like themselves unto the household Servants: and much more will God, as some can (and more may) experience. The Church-enjoyments of serious holy men are the fairest, fullest, clearest and strongest of all they have at any times; and that because God dwells there as in his holy and delightful Temple, and walks there as in his pleasant Gardens and Walks: and where God mostly Dwells and Walks, and takes most pleasure, there he imparts most of his Love and Grace. It is said in *1 Kings 8. 10, 11.* *That the Glory of the Lord filled the House of the Lord, so that the Priest could not stand to Minister; because the glorious presence of God was so exceeding great there; and his distributions of Love and Grace to Solomon and other Saints, so many and great, as that the people went home joyfull and glad of Heart, vers. 66.* and in the *2 Chron. 7. 16.* says God (speaking of the Temple) *mine Eyes and mine Heart shall be there perpetually.* Now if God did so now that material Temple made of Wood and Stone, as to manifest his Glory

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so much there, impart so richly of his Love and Grace to his people, and promised to dwell there continually: how much more will he do so unto his New-Testament Churches of Believers. They shall find that propheticall promise made good to them, in *Psal.* 102. 16. *When the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his Glory.* Besides, a Church-state, is a safe, as well as a thriving comfortable state: for a Church of Christ rightly and duely formed and made up, is a *Garden enclosed, Cant.* 4. 12. *a Spring shut up, a Fountain sealed* (or barr'd): Whilst Wood and Stones lie scattered abroad they may be stolen and carried away from the owner, so while Believers walk apart, and lie up and down scatteringly, they are in great danger of being seduced and lead away from Christ, with some of the errors of the wicked, and so in measure full from the Truth of Christ, *2 Pet.* 3. 17. but now in a Church-state, or formal House of God, they are safer and more secure, because there they are hedged in with the discipline of Christ: there they are watched over by their fellow-members and by the Officers of Christ, who are their overseers and watchmen: there they are as in the orderly Instituted Family or household of Christ, in the way and walks of Christ, and under the Eye and with the special presence of Christ. Whilst an Army of Souldiers walk as single and individual Persons, scattered abroad, they lie open to destruction by their Enemies; but when they are formed up, and walk together under officers and military discipline, every one knowing his place and keep-

keeping it, knowing the commands of their General, and observing them, they are safe, and ready to defend themselves, and offend their Enemies. Particular and rightly constituted Churches of Believers, are like an *Army with Banners*, *Cant.* 6. 4, 10. marching under the constant conduct of Jesus Christ their Captain General, *Eph.* 1. 22, 23. *Heb.* 2. 10.

4. They are formed and set up by Jesus Christ, to be the only Seats and Subjects (as of his glorious presence) so of his Laws, Ordinances, Power and Authority: that they might receive, observe and obey his Laws, declare before all men their owning of him for their Lord, by their open and publique profession of, and subjection unto him as such, and that by their distinct and singular following of him in incorporated Bodies, they might manifest to all men that they are his Subjects and disciples; that they have chosen him for their Lord and King, and his Law for their Rule and Obedience; that they are not their own, but his, and that they have taken up in him as in their happiness and eternal Blessedness, *Col.* 2. 6. *1 Cor.* 6. 19, 20. *2 Cor.* 5. 15. That they are called out of the World, *Joh.* 15. 19. and set apart by his Grace, for himself, to live unto him; and that they have taken upon themselves his holy Yoke, and the observation of all his Laws. So likewise, that his subjects might *with one mind and mouth together*, present their service and homage unto him, as their only Lord, Head and King. For Churches as Churches, or Believers walking according to his appointment
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and direction in Churches, are capable of his holy Supper, that glorious Pledge and Seal of his Love and Grace to them: it is called the *Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ*, 1 Cor. 10. 16. and says the Apostle to the particular congregated Church at *Corinth*, *we being many, are one Bread and one Body*, vers. 17. That great ordinance of the Lords Supper is not given to Believers as such only, but unto Believers as in a Church-state, or incorporated into a Body or Communion together: having the name, form and order of a Church of Christ, and House of God.

The Israelites were not to permit any to Eat the passover until they became members of their Church, *Exod.* 12. 47, 48. Neither will Christ Jesus have any to Eat his Supper out of a Church-State, where and when they may have it in a Church-State. And (as was noted before) it is observable, that almost all the principal Doctrines and Laws of the New-Testament are given and directed unto the Churches, or to Believers as in church'd; as also Teachers and Ruling Elders are provided for, and given to the Churches: and there the Lord Jesus comes, and observes how they are received and obeyed, *Rev.* 2. 23.

5. *God hath Instituted and formed up Believers into Churches, that he may feed and nourish them there, as his flocks: that he may water them as his Gardens, support them as his Houses, order and govern them as his Family's & Households, and that by his Spirit & Ministers. They are appointed to water them, 1 Cor. 3. 6, 7. to feed and nourish them, Act. 20. 17, 23. 1 Pet.*

1. *Pet.* 5. 1, 2, 3. and to rule, govern and take the over-sight of them: *Heb.* 13. 7, 17. 1 *Thes.* 5. 12. They are to teach and instruct them, to warn and caution them: to reprove and exhort them: to comfort them and build them up with the milk and strong meat of Spiritual sound Doctrine, 1 *Cor.* 3. 1, 2. *Heb.* 5. 12, 13, 14. and that by their speaking unto them (as to their own flocks and peculiar Churches and charges, from and under Christ) the Truths of Christ in Love, *they may grow up into him in all things*, *Eph.* 4. 15. So also for Believers regular and orderly walking, *Col.* 2. 5. God is a God of Order, and he loves to see his People walking orderly and regularly, conforming themselves to his Laws and Government. And if earthly Governours (by the Light of Nature) are careful to set up, and give unto their Subjects, Laws and Orders for their regular and orderly walking, and love greatly to see them so to walk under their Laws and Government, in their Cities and politick Bodies; how much more careful is Jesus Christ to set his People in order and method, and how pleasing and delightful must it needs be to Jesus Christ, to see his Subjects walk orderly and regularly in his Cities, and Spiritual Bodies, that are of his own appointment. These are some of the ends of God, in instituting and erecting of Churches. Many other might be named and insisted on, but that I may not exceed my Intentions.

Fourthly, The Churches of Jesus Christ must consist of new-Creatures and sincere-hearted Believers, *Because they can and will*

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answer and prosecute these aforesaid and such like holy ends of God in and by his Churches. I say these can and will because they are fitted and qualified (in measure) by the grace and Spirit of Christ to aim at and effectually to prosecute these holy ends of God; but so cannot others, neither would they, if they could, because they have not the saving Knowledge, nor practical Wisdome of Christ in them: they are strangers in Heart to Jesus Christ and the Power of Godlyness. All others at the best have but a name to live, but are dead at the Root, Rev. 3. 1. Matth. 8. 22. neither are they made a willing People, to joyn Issues and comply with the holy ends of God. Psal. 110. 3. because God hath not (by reason of their wickednesse and obstinacy) wrought in them, to will and to do, as he hath in his peculiar people; they are not yet wrought by God for this self same thing, as real Saints are, Phil. 2. 13. 2 Cor. 5. 5. they are not renewed in the Spirit of their minds, after the Image of Him that Created them, as Saints are, Col. 3. 10. But now real and peculiar Believers are fitted and framed, moulded and polished by the Holy Ghost, for their growing up into a holy Temple in the Lord, Eph. 2. 21. and so by the constant and promised guidance and conduct of their living head, Jesus Christ, with their Spiritual qualifications, they are enabled to answer and perform the great ends of God in erecting and building them up in Churches. When a wise man builds a House, he will propound some ends to himself in his so doing, and accordingly he will make use of, and lay in such materials, and so form and build it

it, as that it may effectually answer his ends, if he be able: Now if he build it with hay and stubble, or with rotten wood, althought it may stand a while, yet be sure it will not stand long, nor answer his ends. So the great master builder who is the Alsufficient and only wise God, propounded great and holy ends to himself, in Instituting and building of Churches and Temples: and these such, as should irre-frustrably be obtained, notwithstanding all possible contingencies & Intervenencies whatsoever for says God, *my purpose shall stand and I will do all my pleasure, Isa. 46. 10.* I will build Churches and Temples, for my Glory, to dwell in them, and walk in them; to have peculiar Love, homage and service from them; to have their free hearty and chearful obedience and Respects: that I might enrich them with my Grace, build them up in Faith and Godlyness, delight in an refresh my self with them; make them a praise in the Earth, and *Glorify the Houses of my Glory: Isa. 60. 7.* That there I may set my ministry, and Officers, and that among them I may set my Laws Rules and Ordinances. But hypocrites and formalists will never answer nor prosecute these ends, as I found by experience among the Old-Church-Members of the *Jews*: I cannot look for it, nor expect it from them; for they are a people of an other Spirit; they slight my Grace and reject my easy yoke: and therefore they shall not be honoured with membership in my Churches; in my particular Gospel Churches; but if they creep in (as many will do) I will loath and abhor their presence.

I will root them up, cast them out, and that into everlasting fire: for whatever they profess to be, yet I know that they are not for my Turn and will stand me in no stead there, but to provoke me to wrath with their Hypocrisy, and make fuell for the fire of my Jealousy. Therefore my New-Testament-Churches shall be built only of Holy and Spiritual materials, not of dead, but living Stones, *1 Pet. 2. 5. Eph. 2. 1. 5.* such as my Word and Spirit shall polish and prepare for that work and Service, that so by them I may obtain my Holy ends and carry on my great designs. I know that my peculiar People will receive, submit unto, and obey my Laws; that they will Love and honour me, that they will shine as lights in the World, and that they will give me kind and cordial entertainment, and that will cleave to and not forsake me. Therefore they shall be my Churches.

Fifthly, *Because all the Laws, Ordinances and Works of Church-Members are holy, Spiritual and Heavenly.* They are such as the natural Man understands not, cannot discern what they are, and that because they are such, and they that are not taught of God savingly and powerfully, to understand and make a Judgment of them, do think and Judge of them carnally and vainly, *1 Cor. 2. 9.* — end. But Believers have them written in their Minds and Hearts beforehand; they have them not without Book; I mean they have the same Laws of Christ written in the books of their hearts, which they find in the Bible, *Jer. 31. 33. Heb. 8. 10, 11. Heb. 10. 16.* by which they are capacitated.

pacitated and (in some measure) enabled to understand, receive, love and rightly obey, the Laws and Ordinances of Christ without. The *Laws*, says *Paul*, is *Spiritual*, *Rom. 7.* and a real sound Believer is called a *Spiritual Man*, *1 Cor. 2.* Their Laws are Holy and Spiritual: their works and businesses in a Church are so likewise, *John 4. 23, 24 Eph. 5. 19. Col. 3. 16.* and a particular congregated Church is called a *Holy-Temple*, and *Spiritual House*, *Eph. 2. 21. 1 Pet. 2. 5.* They have a Holy God, (*who is a Spirit*) to Serve and Worship, a Spiritual head to believe in and obey, and Holy and Spiritual Work to do in their Church-state; and therefore they had need be Holy and Spiritual Persons, not without in profession only, but within in Truth. Almost all the Laws and Ordinances of Christ are committed to them, and God expects his principal and choicest Worship from his Churches, and they are all above and beyond the reach of carnal Men. God first makes Spiritual Men, and then with them he formes Spiritual Houses, and then as such, he gives them Holy Laws and Ordinances, and spiritual work to do; and requires them to do it as spiritual Persons and Churches. Christ doth not form them into Churches as reasonable men, but as good, Holy and Spiritual men, and suits his Laws to their Capacities and States; as at first he framed and suited them to his Laws. Christ calls his People into Churches, and incorporated congregated Bodies, that they may as such receive and practice his spiritual and Holy Church Laws and Ordinances, for his Glory

and their good; and they are spiritual Laws and Ordinances for spiritual men; and therefore only such should be Members of Christ's Churches. For what shall Hypocrites do in the Holy spiritual Temples and Churches of God, and what use will they make of Christ's Laws and Holy Ordinances, but to defile and pollute them, and *eat and drink their own Damnation?* I Cor. II.

Sixthly, *Because the separation between Saints and Sinners begun here in this Life, by the Lords calling men out of the World and forming them up into Holy Temples for himself, is the beginning of that everlasting separation that shall be in the great day of Christ his appearing, between the Sheep and the Goats; Matth. 25. 31, 32, 41.* or at least a shadow and resemblance of it; for the comfort of the Saints and terror of the wicked. Says Christ hereafter I will come in Glory, set upon my Throne, before me shall be gathered all nations, and then will I separate them, *on from another, as a Shepherd divideth this Sheep from the Goats. 31, 32. and then I will say to the Sheep, come ye Blessed of my Father inherit the Kingdome prepared for you; and to the other, go ye Cursed into everlasting fire: 34. 41.* Now because you wil not believe me, nor what I say in this matter, see what I have begun already in it; you see a few seperated from you in this world before your eyes, and formed up into Holy-Temples for me: and this is not their own Work, or done of themselves, or of their own minds and carnal apprehensions, or singular proud notions and Opinions (as you falsely charge them) no, but this thing is done of me:

I will own it as my own Work; for I have commanded them to separate, and have called them out from amongst you, who continue still in your Infidelity and unregenerate States, *John 15. 19. 2 Cor. 6. 14, 15, 16, 17. 2 Tim. 3. 5.* and bid them congregate together as my peculiar People, and become my Spiritual Houses and Churches; and I have by my Spirit made them willing and moved their hearts to do so, as you see them do: I own them, and will stand by them in it, for it is not so much they that have separated themselves, as it is I my self that have done it: and what they have done therein is in obedience unto me, and that to convince you of the Truth of my Word: for as certainly as you see these my People now separated from you, so I will at the last day make an eternal separation between them and you, unless you repent and become my People in Season. And as it is intended for the conviction and terror of the wicked, so also for the comfort and confirmation of Believers; for by the Lords separating them from the World and building them up into Holy-Temples, he gives them a notable pledge, and earnest of the assured and promised difference, of that great and everlasting discrimination & separation, that shall be between them and the wicked. Now good men are apt to think that (because all things seems to happen alike to all as *Solomon* speaks) that there is no difference, or very little between the wicked and them (although there is indeed a vast difference, (upon many accounts) between them now) and so are apt to be discouraged in their duties

and walkings; but to chear them up, and support their Spirits; here says God is a very great distinguishing difference, and a pledge of a greater between you and the World. *I have called you out of the World, and brought you near unto my Self*: I have seperated you already from the Lions and Goats and made you my formal and publique habitations and Holy-Temples; which is your honour, priviledg and dignity. I do not say that all, that are not of such or such particular Churches, are Goats, or unbelievers, no, I cannot entertain such a thought in my Heart; for as I think and fear, that there are many hypocrites crept into Churches, so I believe that there are many gracious Persons, which to their own losse, and Gods dishonour, do live out of Church-fellowship: so there are others that would joyn with them, but cannot, and others can, but will not. But I say, that Jesus Christ will have his Churches made up of Saints only, and not of such as shall be everlastingly seperated, but of such as shall live and reign with Jesus Christ for evermore, in the Church triumphant; and that for this reason (among others) because it may comfort, and confirm the Saints in their hope and walking with God; and convince and terrify the wicked.

Seventhly; The Churches ought to be built of Believers and regenerate persons, *because they may continue and stand fast in all Storms and Tempests; and hold out unto the end, as being built upon the Rock Jesus Christ*. For whatever Church is builded upon the Sand and not upon the Lord Jesus, and by the Authority and help

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of his Word and Spirit, will not stand long; because it wants a bottome to bear up its weight. They must all be built upon the Rock and chief corner-Stone; the foundation that God hath laid, *Matth. 7. 24, 25. 1 Cor. 3. 11. Matth. 16. 18.* the Lord Jesus tells us, *that upon this Rock (that was himself and the Truths that Peter had confessed) will I build my Church, and the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.*

Now Hypocrites are not built upon Christ, for if they were, that great promise of perseverance would belong to them, and then the stony Ground would be in as good and safe a condition. as the good Ground; but the contrary is apparent, *Matth. 13. and Matth. 7.* But it is certain that they are not built on Christ by faith, but are votted in themselves, and build their vain hopes on a sandy Foundation, *Job. 8. Matth. 7.* and in many other Scriptures is manifest. Therefore, if there persons are not built on Christ, their Church-state is not, but upon the Sand. Hence then it follows, that only sound Believers are built on Christ and so they are the persons only that Christ will have built up into Holy-Temples: because the Churches that Christ builds, (he himself says,) he will build upon himself, that they may stand inpregnably in all weathers, and that is only of such as are united unto him by Faith, and have chosen him for their only Rock and Foundation; by a lively Faith, and not of such as do secretly reject him.

Obj. If it be said, that, the Text in *Matth. 16.* speaks of the invisible Catholick Church.

I Answer, And I am speaking too of the Mem-

Members of the Catholick Church; and say, that all particular congregated Churches of Believers, are, or ought (to be such as are united unto and built upon Christ by Faith; and that these ought) to congregate and become Churches of God and none else; and that according unto the directions of the Gospel of Christ: and then, if they be indeed such, that promise in *Matth.* belongs to them, and they shall be secured by it, as well as the Catholick Church, although they be formed up (according to Christs his Institution) into particular congregational Churches. And although (after they are thus formed) they may be broken (in a Sense) and scattered, as the Church at *Jerusalem* was, *Act. 8. 1.* yet they are still secured by that promise, and have communion with each other in Faith. Love, tears and Prayers: in Judgment and affection.

The Lord Jesus suffers in name and Glory by the fall of his Churches, or such as pretend to be so: as he that built his house on the sand is called a foolish man, by Spectators, *Matth. 7.* and if Churches should be so built, either for want of a good Foundation, or good matter, or wise and carefull cementing and forming up the materiels; how greatly will the Wisdom and care of Christ suffer, by the Tongues of his Enemies, because such Churches took upon themselves the name of Christ and pretended to be his people and to walk by his Laws. And as the fall of them will be a Reproach to Christ, so it will be matter of grief and scandal to the weak Members of Christ also whether they were in, or out of those Churches, thus fallen;

len; and it will greatly harden the hearts of Sinners against the good ways of God, and cause them to think that there is no reality in his Gospel Religion; and therefore Christ cannot endure, to see his houses fall to the ground, but takes care, that all that he builds by his Word and Spirit, be so built and secured, as that the Gates of Hell shall not overthrow them, nor by any means prevail against them, to destroy them and that because they are founded, secured & supported by his promise and Spirit.

I might produce many other Reasons for the proof and confirmation of this Truth, that none but real Believers ought to be formed up into a Church of Christ. As concerning the privileges and promises that belong to a Church of Christ. There are many of them (which may be spoken of, on an other head) which are two high and glorious for the Inglorious professing Hypocrites; and therefore they must be entayled only on the true heirs of them, (*viz.*) the living Members of Christ and Children of God. Hypocrites who refuse to have Christ on his own Terms, and who prefer their Lusts before him, and their own Righteousness, before Christs, and daily make him a *Liar*, 1 *John* 5. have nothing to do with them. There is a little Remnant called out of the World, to whom they do onely belong, and they, and only they, may claim them as their own. Again, because only Believers are Christs willing subjects, such as have freely put their necks under his Yoke, and given up themselves in universal obedience to him, and that have heartily chosen him for their Lord
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and Governour, and his Laws for their Rule and practice. But it is well known, that all other men do reject him, and yeild obedience unto the Devil and their Lusts. They will have the Lord Jesus bow down to their Terms, but they will not come up to his. They say as those in *Joh. 6. 60.* this is a hard Yoke, who can bear it: and therefore although we will professe him, that we will not have him rule over us. And therefore he doth not call them to partake of the Children of the Kingdoms Bread, or to his true Subjects priviledges and Blessings, whilst they continue such. Moreover, only true Believers are *Clean*, and *Pure*, all others are unclean: They are strangers to him and his People) *unwashed and uncircumcized in Ears and Hearts.* They are not *Justified* nor *Sanctified*, nor purged from their uncleannesse *by the blood of the Lamb*: and therefore they may not come near to, or touch the holy things of his Church, which are holy, pure things, and sanctified unto the holy use of his enchurched-members. I would not be tedious, and therefore shall wave all further consideration of this matter, although I could multiply Reasons to prove, that only real true Believers should be Church-Members. But I shall speak a few words for the removing of an objection advanced against this Truth, which is this. But we read of *Tares* in the field, amongst the good wheat, good and bad fishes, caught in the net of the Gospel, and brought into the Kingdome; which is the Church of God; as also many evil members in severall of the Congregational Churches, mentioned

tioned in the Scripture, and therefore Churches may consist of good and bad men.

All this may be true, and yet the Truth insisted on, not at all touched or weakened thereby. It is true, if there were evil members in those Gospel Churches, and they proved evil Members indeed, and great afflictions to blessed *Paul*, and the good Members of them. But what then? ought they to have been there, or were they known to be such indeed to the Apostles and other good men, when they admitted them? were they there by Christs call, and with his approbation and allowance, although he permitted them to creep in among his People? Now unlesse it can be proved that they ought to be there, that they were admitted when known to be such, as afterward they appeared to be, that it was their duty and privilege, while such, and that Christ approved there being there: I say until that be proved by the word of God, we must conclude that they were *Usurpers* and had nothing to do in the Churches of Christ, I do not discourse of who were in the Churches, but who ought to be there: Not who thought themselves worthy and crept in of their own accord, but who Christ called there, and came in, in obedience to him. I am sure they were not welcome to Christ or his People: the Apostles wishes such were *Cut off*: *Gal. 5. 12.* and exhorts Believers, *to withdraw from them that walked disorderly*: *2 Thes. 3. 6.* and *to turn away from them*, *2 Tim. 3. 5.* *to mark and avoid them*, *Rom. 16. 17.* and the Lord Jesus gives in charge to his Churches, that they prosecute his Laws against

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gainst disorderly Church-members, even to the casting of them out of the Church, in case they repent not, *Mat. 18. 17.* and threatens the evil Members of the Churches of *Sardis & Laodicea*, severely, *Rev. 3.* and therefore surely, if they were Hypocrites, he would not have found them there, to dishonour his name and grieve his People, as they did.

And as for the instances of the *Tares, and bad fishes brought into the Kingdome of Heaven*, no more can be said for the justifying them, in what they did, than of the other, before minded and answered, and the same Answer will refell these two likewise. But if you mind it, you will find that the Tares there, if meant of Persons and not of doctrines (which is a question) are said to be the *Children of the wicked one, and he that sowed them was the Devil, vers. 38, 39.* So that these Tares, or Members, were not of Jesus Christ his bringing there, but of the Devils; and who will say then that they ought to be there? Will Jesus Christ have the Devils hand and help to enlarge his Church, or will he accept and approve of such persons for his Church-members, to help forward the building of his holy Temple, for the habitation of God, that are chosen and sent by the Devil? As for others it is expressly said *vers. 37.* that *he that soweth the good Seed, is the Son of Man*: and in opposition thereunto, it is said, his Enemy the Devil sowed Tares in the same field, which was hurtfull unto the good seed. Therefore (as I said before) that Hypocrites are not called nor sent by Jesus Christ into Churches, but by the Devil: which is a good Reason

Reason against their being there: And to what purpose are they there, but to grattify the Devil and their own Lusts, to afflict and grieve (if not corrupt) the good Seed, to dishonour Christ and encrease their own misery.

As to the good and bad Fishes, there need no more be said concerning them, then that Hypocrites and rotten hearted men will croud into the Churches of Christ, amongst his good People, but they ought not so to do, for they are not called to come, because they are of Satans Kingdome of darknesse, and have no part or portion with the true Children of God and heirs of his Kingdome. So that I think there hath been enough said as to that, namely, that none ought to be Members of Christs particular Churches, but real Believers. And now I should proceed to speak of the form of a particular congregated Church of Christ, but that I think it necessary to speak a little unto two *Questions* first.

5. *Quest. What fitness or qualifications should Believers find in themselves for their own satisfaction, before they enter into fellowship, & become Church-members, or joyn themselves as members to some Church of Christ.*

Answ. First they should have a well grounded hope of their Regeneration, or new state in Christ, that they have seen their need of Christ; singled him out (by grace) and chosen him upon his own Terms: that they have received a measure of his *anointings*, Grace, Spirit, light and Life, and that they are accepted in the Lord Jesus: that they *have put off the Old Man, and put on the New, and are renewed*

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in measure, by the word and Spirit, *after the Image of Christ*. I say, they should have at least, a well grounded hope. For many gracious hearts have such a hope, that have no assurance; who hold their Title and claim to Christ and Heaven, but had never the seal of it on their hearts; or if they ever had it, they have by their own carelesness lost it; and so have only hope left. And this indeed will hold their Souls in Life (by the Spirit) though not in comfort and satisfaction: *Heb. 6. 19.* and the Apostle tells such that they are *saved by hope*, *Rom. 8. 24.* and that they are the *Children of hope*; which puts them upon that great and Noble Work, of *purifying themselves, as he is pure*: *1 Joh. 3. 3.* and stirs them up, to *perfect holynesse in the fear of God*: *2 Cor. 7. 1.* As faith that precedes it, doth, *Act. 15. 9.*

This *Hope* is not a dead; but a lively hope: it is not idle but operative and working; it is active and laborious in purging out of Lusts, and getting in of Holyness and Grace, *1 Pet. 1. 3.* *1 Joh. 3. 3.* as a sound special Faith is, *Jam. 2. 18.* And the Apostle tells us, that it is an *Anchor of the Soul, both sure and stedfast*, *Heb. 6. 19.* so when God promises mercies unto his People, he tells them, that he will give them a *door of hope*, *Hos. 2. 15.* which hope is *Christ in them*, *Phil. 1. 27.* And therefore if you have this Hope, you are in a happy State, and ought to joyn your selves unto some Church of Christ, give up your selves in universal obedience to Christ, and wait in a house of God for his Seal, and the full assurance of his love
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to your Souls. But more particularly and briefly; I desire you to examine your selves, and see how you can answer these few *Interrogatories*: try your selves effectually and thoroughly by them.

1. Can you say indeed, that you do seriously and heartily desire, chuse and endeavour, to see and be more deeply and powerfully convinced of your own vileness, and sinfulness: of your own weaknesse and wretchednesse, and of your wants and nothingnesse? and that in order to your deep and Spiritual humiliation and self debasing: that you may be more vile in your own eyes, and Jesus Christ, and free grace more precious, high and honourable, more sweet and desirable? that your hearts may be melted into Godly sorrow, and that you may be moved thereby to *abhor your selves, and repent in Dust and Ashes*? *Jeb.* 42. 5, 6.

2. Can you say that you do seriously and heartily desire, chuse and endeavour to believe in Christ, and to receive and accept him upon his own Terms? such as you find in *Mark.* 8. 34. *Like* 14. 26, 27, 28. and elsewhere. Do you so desire, chuse and endeavour to have him with his *Yoke and Cross*, *Matth.* 11. 28, 29. and do you so *Deny* your selves of your sinful self, and righteous self, and worldly self, and supposed able and powerful self; and all other carnal and Spiritual selves, that Christ may only be exalted; that you may be nothing in your Iustification and Salvation, but that Jesus Christ and free Grace, may be *all, and in all things*? *Col.* 3. 11. *Phil.* 3. 7, 8. do you de-

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fire, chuse and endeavour, the having of Christ upon the hardest Terms, and do you desire, &c. that all may go for Christ his Person, his Blood and Righteousness: his Grace, Love, Life and Spirit: for the pardon of your sins and Justification of your Persons: that *you may be found in him, not having your own Righteousnesse, but the Righteousnesse of Christ, by Faith?* Phil. 3. 9. and do you go and present your selves naked, and as condemned Sinners to him, and to God the Father in and by him, that you may be cloathed with the Righteousness of Christ, and that God may pardon, justify and accept you for his sake, only?

3. Do you seriously and heartily desire, chuse and endeavour, to have Christ Jesus for your Lord and Ruler too, Col. 2. 6. that he may Rule in you and over you, and that your Lusts and your selves, your Interests and your all may be subject unto him, and be all at his command and disposal continually? Is Christ the Lord as acceptable unto you, as Christ Jesus the Saviour, and are you willing to obey him, and subject to his Authority and Lordship, as well as to be saved by him? Would you have him destroy your Lusts, make an end of Sin, and bring all under his Obedience?

4. Do you seriously and heartily desire, chuse and endeavour, never to sin more, but to *walk with God unto all well pleasing* continually, Col. 1. 10. and do you pray earnestly, that God would *work in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight*, Heb. 13. 21, that you may in all your waies, honour and glorify him,

him, as the end of your living in this World, 2 Cor. 5. 15. Would you indeed live to the praise of his glorious Grace, and be an Ornament unto his Name and Gospel, and would you *be fruitful in every good Word and Work?* Are these things the Scope, aim and intentment of your hearts and Souls (in some good measure and degree) daily, in duties and Ordinances, and at other times?

5. Do you seriously and heartily chuse and desire communion with Christ, and do you indeed and in truth, endeavour so as to obtain it, and keep it? do you so seek for it in the way of Gospel obedience, and in observing your duty and keeping Christs commands, and do you prefer it before and above earthly, carnal things? do your hearts breathe and pant after it, and are you willing to deny self and carnal Interests to get it? Are you glad when you find it, and sad, when by your own carelessness you lose it? doth it (when obtained) quicken your love to, and zeal for Christ; doth it warm your hearts and cause them (for a time) to run your race in Gospel obedience, cheerfully? doth it lead you unto, and lodge your hearts in Christ, and doth it oblige and bind them faster unto him, and doth it stir you up to thankfulness?

6: Do you seriously, and heartily desire, chuse and endeavour, to be filled with Gospel sincerity towards God and men, and had you rather be sincere and real hearted towards God, than seem to be so towards Men? had you much rather have the Praise of God, than of men, and to be approved of by him, than extolled by

men? Is it your care, aim and endeavour, to carry your selves sincerely before him, and to approve your selves unto him, under the fear & conviction of his all seeing Eye? Is it the great thing you mind and aim at, in your profession and practice; namely, sincerity and uprightness of Heart: do you make conscience of drawing near to God with it, and to season every duty with this divine Salt? do you indeed desire, chuse and endeavour to be *after Gods own Heart* (as David was) and *Nathaniels indeed, in whom is no Guile*, although you cannot get clear, nor rid your selves of all Hypocrisy, as you should? Is Integrity and uprightness of Heart in your Eye, resolutions and Intentions, and is all Hypocrisy hateful and abominable unto you? & do you love sincerity and labour after it indeed? Are you afraid of Hypocrisy, and do you watch and strive against it, as against an Enemy to God and your own Souls, and are you grieved indeed, when you find it in you?

7. *Do you desire and chuse Jesus Christ for the great object of your Love, Delight and Joy; and do you find him to be so, in some Measure? do you desire and endeavour to make him the object of your strongest and warmest affections, and to love him Sincerely, Heartily, Spiritually, fervently and constantly; and do you express your Love to him, by keeping his commandments, and doing the things that are well-pleasing in his sight? Joh. 14. 15. 1 Joh. 3. 22.* Are you grieved and afflicted in Spirit, because you can love him no more, and do you earnestly pray unto him to *Circumcise your hearts*

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to love him, *Deut. 30. 6.* and to Shed abroad his love into your hearts, by the Holy Ghost; that you may love him as you should, *Rom. 5. 5.* Are you glad and do you rejoyce when you find your hearts *Knit* to him in love, and is it your trouble when it is otherwise with you? doth his Love and Loveliness attract and draw your hearts to him, and doth the Love of Christ in your hearts, move and draw you to obey his commands? Is it so indeed, do you find it so sometimes with you?

8. *Is it the desire, choice and endeavour of your Hearts and Souls, to have all sin purged out of your Hearts, and to have them filled with Christ, Grace, Truth, and Holyness, and do you hate your sin, watch and arm against it and endeavour to keep it under? do you indeed aim at, desire, labour and strive to be holy in Heart and Life, and conformable unto Jesus Christ in all things? Are your Lusts your heaviest Burdens and your greatest afflictions; and do you intend and endeavour their utter ruine and destructions? will no degree or measure of Grace satisfy you, but you must and will be perfect, to the utmost, as Christ is? Are you so much concerned with Christ's honour & your Souls holyness and happiness, as that you dare not knowingly sin against them for a World, or do in word or deed, directly or indirectly by omission or commission, that which may dishonour, grieve or wound them? Are these things so indeed?*

9. *Have you a measure of Spiritual knowledge, and discerning of Spiritual things? do you a little understand the nature and concernments*

of a house of God, and the work and duties, the priviledges and enjoyments thereof, and what you have to do there? have you studied and learnt these matters, and do you in measure understand them, and can you make a right and competent Judgment of the ends of God, in Instituting and erecting of Holy Temples, and Spiritual Churches?

10. *Do you intend, purpose and resolve in the light, Life and power of Christ, to seek for and endeavour unfainedly to obtain and prosecute the ends of Church fellowship, when you shall be accepted among them; and do you desire and aim at the holy ends of God in desiring Communion with them?* As (1) To enjoy God, and hold communion with him in all his ordinances and appointments. (2) To worship God there in Spirit and Truth, and give him your homage and service in his house. (3) To shew and declare your subjection and obedience unto him, and to make a publique and open profession of him before men. (4) To receive of his Grace, to enrich your Souls with his fulnesse; and to be sealed by his Spirit unto the day of your Redemption. (5) That you may walk orderly and beautifully, and shine as Lights in the Churches, and in the world before Saints and Sinners. (6) That you may be established in the Truth, live under the watch and care of Christs Ministers, and of fellow Members; that by their inspection and faithful dealings with you, you may be kept from, and brought back from sin to God, by their wise *Reproofs* and holy Instructions. (7) That you may yield up your selves in Universal obedience unto Christ,

Christ, and do all things whatsoever he commands you; that you may have the right use and enjoyment of all your purchased priviledges, and be secured against the Gates of Hell? Are these, and such like ends, in your minds and hearts, in your walking in Church-fellowship; and can you find the forementioned mark or signs of Grace in you, in measure, though not so clearly and fully as you would? Why then I may boldly and humbly tell you, that you are fitted and qualified for Church-membership, that you are called and invited into the house and Temple of God, and that you are indispensibly bound to answer to the call of God, and say, *behold Lord, we come unto thee*, and will freely without delay; thankfully without grudging; humbly without pride, with mourning and rejoycing, *enter into thy Courts*; joyn with thy Churches, and grow into a holy Temple to thy Praise and Honour. We will no longer slight our great priviledges, neglect our great and indispensable Duties, or walk disorderly, as we have done: but we do now willingly come and offer our selves unto thee, and to enter into a solemn engagement, to be thine, to walk in all thy ways, and do the things that please thee.

I say, that Church priviledges are yours; the doors of Gods house stand open for you; Christ stands at the door and waites for you: he invites you to come in, sit down at his Table, and you shall be most freely and heartily welcome to your Lord, and his people. And know, that it is your unavoidable and indispensable duty to enter into his house.

3. *Quest.* Ought a Church of Christ, especially the Guides thereof, to let in any that professe the name and waies of Jesus Christ; (and offer themselves unto them) or ought they not to try and prove them first, whether they are rightly qualified by the grace of Christ, for full membership with his people: if so, then what are the qualifications they should look for, and find in them, for their own satisfaction, which they admit into the holy Temple of God?

Ans. 1. It is certain, that all that professe the name of Christ and his waies, ought not, may not be admitted into the Lords holy Temples; because many, if not the most of them, are very Ignorant of Christ and his ways, and notorious scandalous in their Lives: as sad and wofull experience shews.

2. It hath been (I think) sufficiently proved before, that not any but real-hearted sound Believers, are fit materials for a house and holy Temple of God; and if so, then a Church, or the Guides thereof, may not admit any into it, but such only as they judge by the word of God, and their own charitable discretion, are such indeed; although 'tis possible they may be *Hypocrites*: but they may not admit them if they groundedly know, or think them to be such. For if they should admit such against their knowledge, they betray their Trusts, and defile Christs holy Temple, by taking in such persons as they know, or ought to know, Christ would not have there. And that they ought to try and prove persons, that they may know their worthinesse and fitnessse before they admit them in, is clear, in *Acts* 9. 26. and be-

because Christ hath committed the keys of his Temple unto them, to take in, and put out, according to his will and Appointment. Moreover he blames *Some* for suffering *Tares* (if meant of persons) to be *sown in his Kingdome*, and not endeavouring to prevent and keep them out, *Matth. 13. 25.* says he, *while men Slept, the Enemy came and sowed Tares*: that is, while such as should have kept the Temple Gates shut against them, to have kept them out, were negligent and carelesse of their duty: for they should have done all they could to have kept out the Devils seed; for what agreement hath the *Seed of the Serpent with the Seed of the Woman*, & the Rebels with the true Subjects of Christ? or as *Paul* saith, *what concord hath Christ with Belial?* 2 Cor. 6. 14.

3. As to satisfying qualifications in persons desiring admission into Churches: I say, that when they have been well tryed and are found (in the Judgment of Charity) such as Christ hath received and competently qualified for Church-membership, they ought to *receive them in the Lord*, Rom. 14. 1. Rom. 15. 7.

1. If they can make forth, and declare unto the Church, their (at least seemingly) Regeneration, Conversion, Repentance and Faith in Christ: their knowledge of Christ and his ways, Laws and Ordinances; of their lost and perishing state in Sin, and by reason of it, and their sincere desires and Resolutions to become the Lords, and to walk with him unto all well-pleasing in all his ways.

2. If they are sound in the Faith of the Gospel, I mean in the chief and principal Doctrines and Truths

Truths thereof; although they may be ignorant of, or err in lesser matters. If they have some distinct knowledge, and Faith concerning these, and other such Truths and matters contained in the word of God. As of the state and condition wherein man was first created. How he lost that holy and blessed State, and the misery he brought himself, and all his posterity into thereby. Concerning themselves, that they are by nature *Children of wrath, dead in Sins and Trespases, and condemned to eternal Death.* That they are Enemies to, and at enmity with God. That they have neither will nor power by nature, either to will or do that which they ought, and is pleasing to God. That they have forsaken God, and are under the Curse of the Law, and that they are the Children, Subjects and Servants of the Devil, World and their own Lusts. That God left not all men in this State and condition, but provided an all-sufficient Remedy, namely, Jesus Christ, and that by an Everlasting Covenant, entered into with Christ, in the behalf of men, before the Foundation of the World, *Tit. 1. 2. 2 Tim. 1. 9, Prov. 8.* and that in pursuance thereof, he elected and gave some to Christ, that he might save them, and that of his meer Grace and Love, *Joh. 6. 37, 40. Joh. 10. Joh. 17. Eph. 2. 4.* That God the Father gave and set his Son, the second person in the Trinity, to mediate peace between God and Men, and to reconcile men to God, by his active and passive Obedience. That *Jesus Christ gave himself, and became a propitiation for their Sins.* That he assumed our nature, and

and took it up into a personal Union with himself, whereby there are two natures in one Person, by which he was made capable of his *Mediatorship*. That he being God-man in one Person, took upon himself our guilt and punishment: obeyed the whole Law of God, that men had broken, and *did always do the things that pleased God*. That when he had finished his active obedience, *he became obedient unto the death of the Crosse*, to the wrath of God, and curse of the Law, *Gal. 3. 12. Phil. 2.* That he really dyed and was buried, lay in the Grave, and rose again the third day, and after forty days, he went up into Heaven, *and sat down on the right Hand of God*, and that *he will come again to Judge the Quick and Dead*. That he is *King, Priest, and Prophet*. A King to give Laws unto men, and command their obedience to them: to rule and Govern his-Subjects, and to reward the obedient and punish the disobedient. That *all power in Heaven and Earth, is committed unto him*, and that he is coequally and coeternally God with the Father and holy Spirit. As a high priest he dyed and made *Atonement* for the Sins of his People, and sits in Heaven to make *Intercession*, and appear in the presence of God for them, *Heb. 7. 25. 9. 24.* That there are three persons in the God-Head, but one God. That the Holy Ghost is eternally God, was sent into the World, & came from the Father & Son, for the elect sake, that it is he that regenerates Persons, works effectually in their Hearts, applies Jesus Christ and all his benefits to men, and savingly *Convinces* his Elect of Sin, *Righteousnesse*

ousness and Judgment, Job, 3. 5. Job. 16. 1, 8. 13, 14, 15. That all that rightly Believe in Christ shall be saved, but those that believe not shall be damned, and that all that believe in Christ, must be careful to do good Works. That Believers are made righteous with the Righteousness of Jesus Christ, and that they have none of their own to commend them unto God. That God hath made Jesus Christ unto his chosen, Righteousness, wisdom, sanctification and Redemption, 1 Cor. 1. 30. and that they are made the Righteousness of God in him, 2 Cor. 5. ult. That God imputed their sins to Christ, and imputes the blood and Righteousness of Christ to them; and that they are justified thereby, and not by inherent holiness and Righteousness. That God Loves, Pardons, Justifies and Saves men Freely, without any respect to their good Works, as any cause thereof, but all the moving cause (without himself) is Jesus Christ and his mediation. That the Ground and reason of their obedience and doing Good works, is the revealed will and pleasure of Christ commanding them, and the ends of them are to expresse their thankfulness to God, for his Grace and Love: to please and honour Him: to meet with God and enjoy communion with him: to receive of his Grace and the good of many promises; To shine as lights in the World and be useful unto men: to declare whose and what they are, and to lie up for a reward in another World: to keep their Lusts under and their graces in use and exercise; and to manifest their Respect and Subjection to Jesus Christ,

Christ,

Christ, his Authority and Law. That the Law for the matter of it, as qualified by Christ, is the Rule and Law of all obedience; & that all are bound to yield obedience & subjection to it. That there shall be a *Resurrection of the just and unjust*. That *Regeneration is absolutely necessary to Salvation, and that without it none can enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, Joh. 2. 3, 5, 7.* That the Scriptures of the Old and New-Testament contain and hold forth unto men the whole revealed will of God, and are *sufficient to make the man of God perfect, thorowly furnished to every good Work, 2 Tim. 3. 16, 17.* and that whatsoever you are to believe and do, is contained therein, and that it is the ground of their Faith, Hope and Practice. That Jesus Christ hath instituted and appointed many Ordinances of Worship, for his own Glory and his Peoples profit, and that all are bound to observe, and waite on God in them. That all persons are indispensibly bound to mind and carefully to observe the principal manner and end of all their duties, and to see that they be right, holy and Spiritual indeed, and not please themselves with the matter of duty without them. That no men can serve God, or do any acceptable work unto him, until they are regenerate and put into a state of Grace. These are some of the matters of Faith, that they should rightly (in measure) understand and believe, that are admitted into full membership in the Churches of Christ. And these and other Truths, must not be notionally, lightly and in the general known and believed, but heartily, powerfully and

and particularly, not for others, but themselves; or else their faith and knowledge will no way profit their Souls to Salvation.

3. They must be qualified also with blameless conversations. *Their Conversations must become the Gospel*, Phil. 1. 27. or else they are not meet for membership with Gospel-Churches. Carnal walkings will not suit spiritual Temples. For they will greatly pollute and defile them; stain and darken their beauty and Glory. Therefore they must not be *brawlers or contentious Persons*: they must not be covetous and worldly minded; vain and frothy Persons. They must not be *froward and peevish Persons*; neither must, or may they be *Defrauders*, or such as detain others dues carelessly from them: nor such as slight the worship of God in their Families, or are carelesse of Governing, and educating them in good manners, and the things of God. They may not be such, as are known to neglect duties and ordinances in their times and seasons, or to have vitious families through their neglects: nor any other such kind of persons, whose stinking Spirits and conversations, are odious to God and his People. And therefore whatever their profession be, they may not be accepted or received into the holy Temples of God, until they have repented, of these or any other hateful and scandalous evil, in their carriages and walkings.

4. If they are such as have chosen the Lord Jesus Christ for their King and head; given up and made over themselves, to Jesus Christ, to live in him and to him: have singled him out
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and set him apart (as it were) to be the object of their trust; Love and delight, of their service and obedience. If they have chosen and closed up with him upon his own Terms (as they hope), renouncing and rejecting all their own Righteousnesse, worthynesse, Interests, and sufficiency, and chosen and appropriated him to themselves, for their Righteousnesse, worthynesse, portion and sufficiency; upon the sight and conviction of the nothingness, emptinesse and insufficiency of their own; and with a heart satisfied with perswasion of the lovelynesse, fullnesse, and sufficiency of Christs.

5. *And if all this be seriously, humbly, self-debasingly and heartily done, so far as Men may Judge?* Is it done, or do they make known the dealings of God with their Souls, and their faith in Christ, in such a manner, and (at least seemingly) with such a Spirit, and with the sense and feeling of what they declare? you may also be much helped in making a right Iudgment of them, whether they are sent of God, as fitted by him for Church membership, by the ends they propound unto themselves, and declare unto you, in desiring membership with you. If they do seriously professe that what they do, is in obedience to the will and (as they judge) the call of Christ, as their indispensable duty, and that they dare not live any longer in the neglect of the Church-ordinances of Christ. That they joyn in fellowship to meet with and enjoy God; to receive of his fulnesse, to fit and enable them to the performance of all duties, and conform their hearts and lives to the will

will of God in all things: and other ends, before named. To which they do seriously bind themselves to God to perform and prosecute; as also to walk and carry themselves in his Church, according to the will of God, through the Grace of Christ. I say such may undoubtedly be accounted worthy Members, and be received in as such.

CHAP. VI.

Of the Formal cause of a Congregational Gospel-Church.

6. **Q**uest. *What is the formalis ratio; or formal cause of a particular Church of Christ? or how, and by what means should Believers and fit materials be formed up, and become a beautiful formal House or Temple of God, for him to dwell in?*

Ans. First, it is certain (in experience) that every house consists of matter and form, and as men cannot have houses to dwell in, without matter and form, or materials formed up, and laid together in order by the Art of Men, so cannot God (properly) have a Spiritual house without matter and form. God alludes to mens houses, and the old Jewish Temple, when he calls and styles his Gospel Churches, his houses and Temples; so likewise, Cities and Corporations, that are of mens forming: and we all know, that a great number of materials scattered abroad, lying here and there, make not a house, although they are well fitted and framed for a house, but
makes

it is the orderly forming them up together that makes a house. *David* provided many excellent materials to build God a house, yet says God, *thou shalt not build it, but Solomon thy Son shall*: and it was not a house until *Solomon's* days; he made the house of *David's* materials. So a Company, or great number of Believers scattered up and down here and there, make not a Gospel-Church, or holy Temple of God, how holy and excellent soever they are; no more than the materials for the Temple, made a Temple in *David's* days: It is contrary to every mans reason and experience to imagine it. Neither are a number of Believers meeting occasionally together for the celebration of some Ordinances (though often) therefore a Church, although they know and love each other, and are satisfied of the good states of each other: Neither doth their living together within the bounds or limits of a Parish make them a Church, nor all of them together: because they want the constitutive cause, or (*formalis ratio*) of a Church or House of God: Hence says the Text in allusion unto material houses, and the Jewish Temple, which was once the place of the special worship and presence of God, *Deut. 12. 5, 11. 2 Chron. 7. 15, 16. Ye are built and fully framed, for a habitation of God, and being so framed, and that not by man, but the Spirit, ye grow into a Holy Temple in the Lord.* And the Church of *Corinth* was so built into a Holy-Temple, *1 Cor. 3. 16, 17. 2 Cor. 6. 16.* Now if a number or company of Believers dwelling near together.

as in Cities usually they do, and their occasional meeting together to worship God in some Ordinances, did make them a formal house of God; what need of building them up into a house? and it is a matter of great weight and moment to me, what the Apostle says in the Text, (last *vers.*) concerning the holy Spirit, namely, that he should be the great Agent and doer of it; which clearly shews, that it is a matter of very great concernment, with respect to God and Believers, to have them well and orderly formed together into a Church, House or Temple of God: for else the holy Spirit would never thus appropriate it, and the whole of it unto himself, as being only able to do it, as his own proper work; it being too great for men & Angels to do, but from and by him. And I think if it were so light and inconsiderable a matter as some would have it, it would have been a great dishonour, rather than an honour to the holy Ghost, to have entituled himself to it, and have taken it upon himself, as the sole cause thereof.

And as the Jewish Temple was so to be built and formed, as that it might continue in its beauty and glory, so undoubtedly ought the Lords Spiritual Temples now: not for a few days, but for ever: for otherwise they will be rather like the Israelites Tents and Tabernacle in the wilderness, transient and removing from place to place, while they were Journeying towards their rest; but when they were settled in their Land, then they were to have a fixed Temple to meet God in: and so the Apostle speaking to and of the particular congregated

gregated Church of *Ephesus*, alludes unto the Temple of God at *Jerusalem*, as a fixed settled place of Gods worship; when he says, they are a *holy Temple and habitation of God*. Now if persons occasionally meeting together for the worship of God, make a Gospel Church without any more adoe, then they may be here to Day, and gone to Morrow; In such a place was a Church & Temple of God Yesterday, but none to Day; for they are not fixed, but transcient: they are no more bound to one another, with whom they sometimes walked, than to others of Gods People, which they never saw till to Day: And if they have a mind to do so, they may go to five or ten several places to Morrow, and five take up with one Minister, and ten with another. &c. for a Week, Month or Year, as they please; if they be not formed and builded together, and bound fast together, as a House, Temple or Family under the rule, Inspection, and teaching of fixed stated Officers. For either they belong to one fixed household and Family, or to none at all; they have their own *Officers* or none at all: for if they are as a Common, without any bounds or property, as they must be, if not fixed and tyed some where, how many absurdities will unavoidably follow? As first, while they are in this moving and wandering condition, they are not a House or Temple of God, but scattered Stones and Timber, and so cannot bear the name and honour of a Holy Temple and Church of God. 2. They cannot whilst in such a condition, be called, owned or accounted a Holy Church and Temple of God, either by

God or Men. 3. Neither shall they have, neither indeed can they expect or look for Church-blessings and priviledges, or claim the Good of the promises made to Saints as a formed, fixed Temple or House of God, as that God should dwell & walk with & amongst them, as he hath promised to do in his Churches and Temples, 2 *Cor.* 6. 16. *Rev.* 2. 1. *Eph.* 2. 22. Neither can they orderly participate of the *Lords Supper*, for that Ordinance belongs to the fixed households of God, not to scattered Saints occasionally meeting together, as Saints only, without any tye or obligation one to another, and to their Ministers, that should Minister it unto them; these and other priviledges they cannot claim while they walk irregularly and disorderly. 4. They make the ordinance & Institution of particular Churches null and void, and of no force and vertue at all; and so Christ hath Instituted and appointed them in vain, that they are of no use, profit or concernment unto Saints. For it will inevitably follow (I think) that in case their loose walkings, without any fixed order or obligation on each other, to live together as a distinct household or Family of God, be the condition wherein they should live and walk; that then they have found out a better way to live and walk in, for the glory of God, and their own profit, than Jesus Christ hath done, and so they do practically controul him, and in effect say, that they are wiser than Christ, *the Wisdom of God*; for they have found out a more pleasing and profitable way for themselves than Christ appointed and instituted for them;

them; so that Jesus Christ and the holy Ghost, might have spared their pains in that matter; & so the Institution, and the Love, Wisdom, care and Authority of Christ in that case, are all thrown down to the ground. 5. There can be no *Discipline*, orderly or profitably exercised amongst Believers, while in an unchurched state and condition. For how can offended persons after the *first & Second Admonition*, tell the Church of an offending person his Sin and obstinacy, and of their dealings with him to bring him to Repentance, as commanded, *Matth.* 18. 15, 16, 17. if there be no fixed Church to which they do belong? and how can the cause be heard, and the offender dealt withall, according to that charge, by the Church, when there is none? What power have any Believers one over another but by their mutual consent, and engagement one to another, to give and take Reproofs and Admonitions, to and of one another? or how can they call *Offenders* to an account, and require their attendance and subjection to their executing the Laws of Christ upon them, unlesse they are a formed-Body, and by virtue of their joyn't Relation, not as Believers only, but as united and engaged Believers to one another in that Society? The *Rulers* of a Corporation may not exercise Authority, or execute their Corporation-Laws on such persons as have no Relation to them, although they are the *Kings* subjects as well as those that are incorporated: Neither may a thousand persons in a place exercise Jurisdiction over each other, because they live and often converse together: Neither have

many Believers such power over each other, while they walk as so many single & individual persons, without a Church-relation to one another, as they might have in a Church-relation, as the forementioned Text evinces. Besides, (6.) The officers or Ministers of Christ will not be able to discharge their work and duty unto them, while they walk loosely and disorderly.

For how can they watch and feed them as their own particular Flocks and charge, unless there be a fixed Relation between them, and they know where to find them? which they cannot do, unless their flocks be tyed to them, and have mutually chosen each other, (as was said before) the officers are to administer in the name of Christ unto them, in an especial manner; and they are to wait on, and submit to their regular ministration. Church-Officers must officiate in the Church, and all must know and work within their own bounds, and to their own charge. So the *Elders* of the particular congregated Church at *Ephesus* were charged to feed and watch over that particular Church, as their own peculiar flock and charge, *Acts* 20. 17, 28. and so were the several *Angels* or Officers of these other Churches, mentioned in the *Revelations*, all which are called *Churches*, which had matter and form. And besides these evil consequences, there are many other that I could name, if it were needful, and time would permit, which would sufficiently evince the Truth pleaded for.

Now I shall proceed to shew how Believers should (by the Holy Ghost) form up themselves into a Church-state, or Temple of God,

God, for his Glory and their own profit and Spiritual welfare; or what the form of a Church is, and wherein it lies. *Shew them the form of the House, and the fashion of it, and the goings out thereof, and the comings in thereof, and all the forms thereof, and all the Laws thereof, and all the Ordinances thereof, Ezek. 43. 11.*

First, the persons intending to joyn themselves together, & to become a Church or Temple of God, for his Name and Glory, and the Spiritual good of their own Souls, and for the orderly celebration of all the Lords appointments and worship in a Church; they should be *satisfied* in each others fitnessse, that they are such as Jesus Christ hath *received*, *Rom. 15. 16.* and *Regenerated*, *Joh. 3. 3.* wrought and made ready for it, *2 Cor. 5. 5.* that they are united to Christ by Faith, and sanctified to his use; Members of Christ, and heirs of the Kingdom. I say, they should be satisfied in a charitable Judgment, that they are such; that so they may take each other, and have their hearts kint to one another in Spiritual real Love, as such; and so have confidence in and of each other, that they will live together, as such, in their Church-state. *God would not have an Oxe and an Asse draw together in ore Yoke,* neither will he have visible Saints and Sinners joyn together and build him a Gospel-Church, or holy Temple to dwell in. What have the uncircumcized to do in the Lords Holy Temple, with the circumcized? If Godshouse must be a holy Temple, yea *holynesse to God*, *Isa. 63. 15.* then it must consist of, and be formed of holy persons; for unclean and un-

holy persons cannot make a holy spiritual house for his glorious presence. Therefore such as joyn together into a Church-state, ought to know (as well as they can) and be satisfied of the fitnesse and meetnesse of each other, as well as each person of himself, for these and other Reasons that might be named.

Secondly, When a competent number of Believers are well satisfied in and of each others fitnesse to build a holy Temple for God; they should meet together, and solemnly present themselves before God; humble themselves and acknowledge their own weaknesse, ignorance and unworthynesse: for although they may be in a sense meet and worthy, yet because of their indwelling Lusts and actual Transgressions, they may see matter enough in and by themselves, to cry out (as *Isaiah* did) we are unclean and unworthy, and to ask pardon and forgiveness of God: so also to tell God what they are about to do, and entreat him to *send forth his Light and Truth* into their hearts, and by his holy Spirit to lead, assist and guide them in the right way, according to this promise, *Psal.* 25. 12. *Isa.* 61. 8. *Joh.* 16. 13. For although they may have (as they have) a plain and perfect Rule before them; to guide them in this weighty matter, yet they may want light in their hearts, to walk by it clearly and exactly, as they ought to do; which the holy Spirit (that hath made them willing by his power) *Psal.* 110. 3. will supply with his light, upon importunate asking it. Thus *Ezra* did, when concerned in Temple-work, *chapt.* 8. 21. and it is prophesied

sied by *David*, that when God should build up his Church, he would do it upon his peoples prayers, *Psal.* 102. And as they should pray for light and counsel in their hearts, from the holy Ghost, (who is and will be owned and accounted the chief Agent in the work of building Gospel-Churches; as in preparing Materials, making them willing, guiding and directing them in the work) so that God would vouchsafe them his presence, own and bless them in their Church-state; ratifie and confirm the labour of their hands, and prosper them to his Glory, & their own edification & comfort.

3. When this is done, and their hearts are warmed with the presence of God, and their minds enlightned with the Spirits Beams of Light, shining in upon them, in answer to their Prayers; and their hearts thereby faster knit to each other in Love, as to the living Members of Christ; then they should declare to each other their free, full and cordial acceptance of, and satisfaction in one another; expresse to one another their real, hearty and joynt Resolutions, purposes and Intentions (by the help of God) to live and walk together as a Church of Christ, in the celebration of all the ordinances of Christ in the Church: and engage, covenant and promise to take upon themselves the practice and observation of all the Laws of Christ, and duties one to another in that state and Relation; *taking hold of the Covenant of Grace*, accepting the Lord Jesus for their Lord, Head and Saviour, resigning up themselves unto him, and professing their unfained subjection to him and all his Rules,

A Gospel-Church: or, Rules, Laws and Orders, and that they will submit themselves one to another in the fear of God, Eph. 5. 21. as he hath commanded them. And which may be confirmed to one another, by giving each other the right hands of fellowship, Gal. 2. 9.

This I take to be the formal constituting cause of a Church, or Temple of God; and I know no other: but some there must be; and I think to this agree several Scripture-instances, that (if rightly understood) amounts to as much as aforesaid. Thus the Israelites became a Church; God propounded to them, what he would have them observe and do, and accordingly the whole congregation received what was said, and engaged to do and observe what God required of them, *Exod. 24. 3. And Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord; and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the Lord hath said, will we do: so Deut. 5. 27. Exod. 20. 19. Deut. 29. 9. 14.* This was freely and voluntarily done by them, and thereby they became a Church, and were solemnly admitted unto all the worship and priviledges thereof, and God accepted and approved of what they had done, *Deut. 5. 27, 28. Go thou near and hear all that the Lord our God shall say, &c. and we will hear it, and do it. And the Lord heard the voice of your words when ye spake unto me, and the Lord said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this People, which they have spoken unto thee: They have well said, all that they have spoken. And the like procedure we find amongst them after they*

they had corrupted themselves and their Church-state, broken their solemn engagement, and departed from God; and upon conviction of their so doing, and of their duty to God and one another, they return to God and renew their Church-engagement, *Ioshua* 24. 16, to 27. *vers.* So in *Asa* his daies, *2 Chron.* 15. 10, to 16. *v.* and *Ezra.* 10. and *Neh.* 9. and 10. *chapt.* And somewhat like to this we find in the New Testament, *2 Cor.* 8. 5. *And this they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God:* And the Apostle minds the Church at *Corinth*, of their professed Subjection unto the Gospel of Christ, *2 Cor.* 9. 13. which it seems was solemnly done at their congregating and en-churching; for then is the time of doing it solemnly and publicquely, for the satisfaction of one another, when they openly and avowedly take upon themselves by mutual consent and agreement, as an incorporated body, the observation of all the Laws and Ordinances of Christ together. To the same purpose also, is that passage in *Col.* 2. 6. *As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.* The Apostle writes to them as a particular congregated Church, and tells them that they had received Jesus Christ the Lord, which was solemnly done, (in all probability) at their embodying. And this seems to be spoken of in *Psal.* 50. 5. *Gather my Saints together unto me: those that have made a Covenant with me by Sacrifice.* And to the same purpose, in *Jer.* 50. 4, 5. And indeed, it is clear to me, that the nature of the thing requires it, were there

there no Scriptures to countenance it. For they are (as hath been said) called and compared to Houses, Temples, Corporations, Cities, Families, and to voluntary, not meer natural Relations, they must of necessity, be knit and formed into such a State and Relation, by their own free choice and engagement; to live and walk together as such: And this action of Believers is of, and by the Lord, in *Act. 2. 41.* it is said, *ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις, were added,* and in *vers. 47.* *προβέβηκεν, the Lord added,* namely, to the particular congregational Church at *Jerusalem.* So that upon the whole I infer, that Believers ought so to joyn themselves together into Churches, as hath been shewed; which I hope I may affirm and assert without reflection on, or offence to such as are otherwise minded, if any such there be that fear God.

Believers being thus built and formed together, are now become a holy Temple of God; and are accordingly owned by him as such; and now they are the seat and subject of all the Laws, and Ordinances, power and Authority, that Jesus Christ hath given to, and for his Churches use and benefit: I mean, they, or this Church so formed and built, have all these essentially, though not formally, until Christ set one or more teaching Elders in it, for the orderly using and managing of that his power and Authority given to the Church. Yet I say, (I think) that it doth essentially reside in them, as the first subject of the *Keys*; for I find the keys given unto, them for the use and behoof of the Church, *Matth. 16. 18, 19.* which said
power

power of the Keys, cannot be given only to *Peter*, nor unto the universal or Catholick Church, that it should use them as such, for that is impossible; but they were given to particular Churches, as formed up of Believers. namely, to such as could have matters brought to, and be received and heard by them, from an offended Brother, *Matth.* 18. 15, 16, 17. and such a Church is here meant, as had power to deal with a sinning member, in case of obstinacy, and therefore the Catholick Church (as such) is nor there intended.

Now this Church spoken of hath power to elect and call such persons (out from amongst themselves, to use and exert the power and authority of Jesus Christ already given them, and Ministering to them in the Name of the Lord) as they judge the Lord Jesus hath fitted, qualified for, given to, and sent amongst them, and invested with Authority and abilities for their Good. I say, they have power to elect and call such to office power over them, in the Lord, and that they ought with all convenient speed, after they are built up, to do it, because till that be done, they cannot orderly and regularly administer or receive the Seals of the Covenant: for all cannot exert and exercise that power that doth essentially reside in themselves, as a Church; neither can any private Member, while such; and therefore it must be done by *Officers*, or one in Office, that is called, set apart and wholly dedicated to the work of the Ministry amongst them. *Therefore they may and ought, to look out from among themselves, and call to Office, such as they judge*

CHAP. V.

*Shewing what Officers Christ hath appointed
 for, and given to his Gospel-Churches;
 and what are their Offices and works in a
 Holy Temple of God.*

7. **Q**uest. What officers hath Jesus Christ given to the Church?

Ans. The Lord Jesus hath (by his Sovereign Authority) given to his Church, *Pastors* and *Teachers*, *Ruling Elders* and *Deacons*. All which Officers are invested with different power, and entrusted with different works in the Church. Now the Teaching-ruling Officers, have several names and appellations given them, according to the particular parts and branches of their work in the Church; As *Pastors*, *Teachers*, *Elders*, *Bishops*, *Guides*. All these names are given to the same Persons and Officers in the Church. Sometimes they are called *Pastors* and *Teachers*, *Eph. 4. 11.* sometimes *Elders*, *1 Tim. 5. 17.* *1 Pet. 5. 1.* sometimes *Bishops* or *Overseers*, *Act. 20. 28.* sometimes *Guides*, *Heb. 13. 7, 17.* and they are of the same sort, order and degree; their work, office and power the same: for although they have different names in sound, yet not of work, power and Authority in the Church. The persons are the same, their office, power and authority the same, and

and their work the same. The Scripture doth no where give one ordinary teaching Officer more power and Authority than another, or set one sort of Teaching Elders over another sort, nor give them distinct and different work to do in the Church; but so, as that whatever power or work a Bishop hath in the Church to exercise and do, the same hath an Elder or Pastor also. Hath a Bishop power and authority to *command and Teach*? so hath an Elder too; hath a Bishop (I mean one of Christs making) the ordering of Church-matters, and managing the discipline thereof? so hath an Elder also, *1 Tim. 5. 17.* for they are the same.

Besides Teaching Elders, the Lord Iesus hath given and appointed meer ruling Elders to his Church also, for the well-being, peace and establishment of the Church, and to assist and help the Teaching ruling Elders, in looking after & taking care of the concerns of the Church, called *Helps*, *1 Cor. 12. 28.* and they are expressly called *Ruling Elders*, distinct-ly from the Teaching ruling Elders, *1 Tim 5. 17.* and *Helps, Governments*, in *1 Cor. 12. 28.* and in *Rom. 12. 8.* it is said, *he that ruleth let him do it with diligence*, and distinguisheth them from Teaching, Ministering and exhorting Rulers, (for Teachers have the power of rule and discipline as well as the meer ruling Elders) in *7. 8. verses*. And the Apostle speaks not there of different *Offices* in the same persons (though that is a Truth) but of different persons and Officers; for says he, *let the Teachers wait on their Teaching, Ministering, and exhorting,*

ing, that is, as it is their great and principal work, (as indeed it is) and therefore to ease them a little of the ruling part of their work, and that they may the more fixedly and chearfully attend unto, and perform that other part of their work, namely, to teach and Minister in the Church, the Lord Jesus hath appointed some to attend only (ordinarily) to the work of ruling, to keep all in order in the Church; and therefore charges them to *do it with diligence*, Rom. 12. 8. Besides these, the Lord hath given *Deacons* to his Church also, *Act. 6. 1 Tim. 3. 8.* to 14. *vers.* and *Phil. 1. 1.* for another kind of work, namely to *attend Tables*, to look after the poor, and provide for them; to dispose of the Churches distributions and charity, for the profit of the whole, and relief of the poor of the Church.

8. *Quest. How ought Pastors and Teachers to be qualified? or what is required unto their right constitution and officiating in the Church, as such Officers?*

Answ. First, They must be furnished with Ministerial Gifts for their work; namely, such as Christ promised, and ascended up to Heaven to give unto men for the work of the Ministry, and which he received of the Father for them, even then, when he *gave all things into his hand*, *Joh. 3. 35.* which are absolutely necessary for all that take upon them the great work of the Ministry, and the care and charge of Souls, or to oversee and edifie the Body of Christ. These Gifts are spiritual, which they receive not from men, but from Christ their Lord, who sends them as his Stewards into his household,

to give them meat in due season, *Matth. 24.* as his servants into his vineyard to dresse, prune and order it, to keep and water it, for his use, that it may bring forth fruit to his Glory. And intending to imploy and make such use of them there, he enriches all that he sends with his own Ministerial Gifts. *Eph. 4. 8, 10, 11, 12.* When he ascended up on high, he led Captivity Captive, and gave Gifts unto men. He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all Heavens, that he might fill all things. And he gave some Apostles, and some Pastours and Teachers; for the perfecting of the Saints, for the work of the Ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. Here is an account of his Gifts, and the person receiving them, and also the end for which. To the same purpose the Apostle speaks in *Rom. 12. 6.* and *1 Cor. 12.* as you may read there at large, from the beginning to the end: Where you have an account of the several Gifts themselves, which are called *Spiritual*, *vers. 1, 2.* The Authour or immediate Doner of them, *7.* as also the end of the Spirits giving them unto men, and the place where they should be exercised and laid out, *7. 28.* and in other verses there. These Ministerial Gifts are not given to all Believers, because they are not intended nor called to the work and Office of the Ministry in the Church, but they are intended and given to them, whom Jesus Christ sends into his Church, and inclines the Churches hearts to call and accept them, for their Officers and Ministers.

Secondly, As they must be gifted with ministerial Spiritual Gifts, so they must be gra-

ced also with special saving Grace, for the spiritual and evangelical discharge of their Ministerial work in the Church; or else they will never be able *Ministers of the New Testament*, although they may be of the Letter, 2 Cor. 3. 6. They must be called out of darknesse, into the marvellous saving light of Christ, 1 Pet. 2. 9. and be the Children of Light, Eph. 5. 8. before they can hold forth indeed the light of the Gospel and grace of Christ unto others. They must be first taught of God themselves, before they can spiritually teach others; and be tutored in Christs School, before they will be wise Builders up of the Body of Christ, in the *Mysteries of his Kingdome*, Mark 4. 11. They must first have the Spirit of God in their own hearts, *to make them wise unto Salvation*, before they can make others wise unto Salvation. They must not learn their Lessons without, in mens or Gods Books, but they must also experience and be able to read the Gospel within, that they preach to others. They must first learn, and be acquainted themselves with and in the right way to Heaven, before they can be good *Pilots* and *Guides* of others thither. They must first be quickened and enlivened themselves, by & with the Life of Jesus, before they can claim a right to the Ministry of Christ in his Church, or hold forth and rightly communicate the word of Life to others. Many think that Grace is not necessary in a Minister, or for the Ministry, where are ministerial Gifts, and (as they say) a blamelesse conversation; but surely, the special Grace, and Spirit of Christ are the only necessary and useful things,

things, (if I may so speak) for the fitting and qualifying a Gospel-Minister, a Church-Officer and Guide. But undoubtedly it is a mistake; for how can they bring out of their Treasury, things new and old, for the profit of men, if there be none laid in? *A good man out of the good treasure of the heart, bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure, bringeth forth evil things, Matth. 12.*

35. *And men cannot gather Grapes of Thornes, and figs of Thistles, Matth. 7. 16.* And what are Hypocrites, but such? Are they not in darknesse, and doth not the Lord Jesus call the Scribes and Pharisees, and Doctors of the Law, *Fools and Blind*, notwithstanding their great Gifts? Are not all unregenerate and gracelesse persons, *ravening Wolves*, although covered with Sheeps-skins? and doth not Christ caution his Sheep against them, and charge them to take heed and beware of them? *Mat. 7. 15.* And when Christ sends forth labourers into his Vineyard, says he to them, *I send you forth, as Sheep in the midst of Wolves? Matth. 10. 16* Christ doth not say, I send forth Wolves in Sheeps cloathing, to convert, nourish and build up my Sheep unto eternal life. Moreover, Ministers must not only preach to men from the head (the subject of meer Gifts) but from their hearts also; from strong affections, tender bowels of compassion, and sincere Love to Souls; which they cannot do, until they are made new Creatures, holy and gracious men. For how can they love and pity others Souls, who have no love and pity for their own? and how can they affectionately persuade

men, who know not experimentally *the terror of the Lord*? 2 Cor. 5. 11. How can such open the Mystery and spirituality of the Gospel unto men, who were never taught it themselves? and how can they so preach the Gospel of Life, who are yet dead in Sins themselves, as to enliven others? Therefore all the Ministers that Jesus Christ impowers and sends into his Churches, in special love and mercy, he first graceth with his special light & life, joyns and unites them to himself, and puts some of his own Image, Nature, and qualities upon them, before he sends them, or will be with them, and blesse them. Can or will such take care of the Church of Christ as such, to water and break the Bread of Life unto them, who take no care about their own Souls, nor care what becomes of them? And if Jesus Christ will have none but real hearted Believers, and living Members of his Body, in his Churches, (as hath been shewed) then certainly he will not allow or approve of *Gracelesse, and unregenerate Guides and Overseers* in them; and if his Churches are holy Temples appointed for his presence and residence, his Glory and delight, (as they are, as hath been shewed) then assuredly, he will not have *carnal and unbelieving Stewards* in them, to manage all the affairs and concernments of them? And if all his Laws and Ordinances, which he hath given to his Churches, be holy and spiritual, (as they are) and Church-Officers, (I mean the Pastors and Elders) are to be his mouths to them, and the Churches mouths to him, and to administer his holy and Spiritual matters and things in his Name,

Name, to his Glory and the Churches Spiritual profit; then surely, they ought to be holy and spiritual Men. For will he own such for his Ministers as have no acquaintance with him, or Relation to him; who have no peculiar love for him, nor dependance on him; who have not hearts to obey him, and make him the great end of their work; and who never received the Truth in the love of it into their own hearts? Will the holy and loving Head and Husband of his Church, set over them Christlesse, lifelesse, and gracelesse men, (as all unregenerate persons are) who neither fear or love him, or his Church sincerely, to watch over them, and impart his secrets and counsels to them? surely no. And therefore they must be fitted and qualified with saving Graces, as well as Ministerial Gifts, for office, power and work in the Church of Christ. I might argue this point very largely and copiously, did I intend a large discourse, as I do not, but to use all possible brevity, in all things, I shall mention and present to consideration, in the whole of the discourse.

3. And therefore, *Thirdly*, they should not only have, and be qualified with spiritual Gifts, and special Grace, *but with the holy Ghost also*. It is not such Gifts and Grace, that will sufficiently qualifie and enable men to discharge their ministerial work in the Church, without the Spirit. They will not be willing, ready, nor apt to teach, without the Spirit, 1 Pet. 5. 1, 2. 1 Tim. 3. 2. Neither will they be able to divide the word aright, without the Spirit, 2 Tim. 2. 15. And there-

fore hath Jesus Christ promised to be with them in an especial manner, in their Ministerial work, (who are his Ministers) *Mat. 28. 18, 20. Joh. 14. 15, and 16. chapters.* They must preach and pray by the Spirit; watch over, feed and water the Church by the Spirit, for their Gifts and Graces can do nothing in this matter, but by the Spirit. And therefore the holy Spirit is promised to help them; to teach, warm, strengthen and quicken them; to comfort, lead and Guide them; and whenever Christ sends any *Shepherds* into his *Sheep-fold*, (in love and mercy) he sends them, and they come there with the holy Ghost in their hearts. Look over *Pauls Epistles to Timothy and Titus*, and to the particular Churches, and you may find this Truth confirmed. Thus God promised his New Testament Churches long before they subsisted, or had a being in the World, *Jer. 3. 15. And I will give you Pastors according to mine own heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding.* It is the Spirit that makes men able Ministers of the New Testament and Spirit, *2 Cor. 3. 6.* not created Grace and Gifts only. The *Apostles spake the word of God, as the Spirit gave them utterance, Acts 2. 4.* and as they were moved (or carried forth) by the holy Ghost, *2 Pet. 1. 21. A Temple of God, is built by the Spirit for the habitation of God, Eph. 2. 21, 22.* all the Laws and Ordinances of the Temple are given forth by the Spirit from Christ, *Joh. 16. 13, 14, 15.* all the Grace and Gifts bestowed on men, are by the Spirit; their Life, strength and successe is by and from the Spirit: their work

work and authority in the Church, is given them by the Spirit; and therefore the holy Spirit will accompany and abide with his own Ministers there.

Fourthly, *They must be qualified and adorned with singular Spirits, with excellent and choice Spirits and frames of Heart*: they should excel others in such qualities and virtues as these. First, *they should be singular and excelling in knowledge and Spiritual understanding*, to discern the difference of things that differ, and to judge of Spiritual things Spiritually, 1 Cor. 2. They should abound in heavenly wisdom and prudence, in conformity to their Lord Christ. Secondly, *They should be eminent and singular in Gospel simplicity and sincerity* too, 2 Cor. 1. 12. 2 Cor. 2. 17. Thirdly, *They should be eminent and singular in Humility*; in all meekness, humbleness of mind and conversation, 1 Pet. 5. 1. --- 6. Of all men in the world, they must not be proud and lofty in their hearts and carriages, but meek and lowly, Mat. 11. 29. 2 Tim. 2. 25. Fourthly, *They must be eminent and singular in Gentleness and peaceableness*; they must not brawl nor strive, 2 Tim. 2. 24. 1 Tim. 3. 3. Fifthly, *They must be eminent in Self-denial and curbing the Flesh*; keeping under carnal, worldly self, and crossing the desires of the Flesh and of the Mind, 1 Cor. 9. ult. Sixthly, *They must be eminent and singular in patience and contentation*, they must not be soon angry, or moved to passion and wrath, 1 Tim. 3. Seventhly, *They must be eminent and singular in a sober, serious, holy cheerfulness and sweetness, pleasantness and*

affability; they must not be of vain and frothy Spirits, nor of froward, sullen, lumpish and sad carriages and deportments: for these things are hateful in all Christians, much more are they so in such as are set in the Church, for lights and Examples to them. This is a part of that good behaviour, the Apostle says, they must be endued withal, *1 Tim. 3. 2.* Eighthly, They must be eminent and singular in *zeal and fervency* also. For if private Christians should abound in it, *Rom. 12. 11. 2 Cor. 7. 11.* then much more should the Ministers of Christ, *Tir. 2. 14. Rev. 3. 19.* Ninthly, They must be eminent and singular in *Love, pity and bowels of compassion to Souls*; they must not be of hard and insensible Spirits, but full of tender earning bowels towards their flocks, *Col. 3. 12. 1 Pet. 3. 8. Rom. 12. 15.* So was Jesus Christ, and so was Paul towards all sorts of men they had to do withall, (excepting obstinate Sinners, who trampled pearles under their feet) and so must Ministers be now. *Be ye kind one to another, tender hearted,* (says Paul) *Eph. 4. ult.* Tenthly, They must be eminent and singular in *Heavenly mindednesse*; they must not be covetous nor greedy after worldly things; which the Apostle calls *filthy lucre*, *1 Tim. 3. 3. Tir. 1. 7. 1 Pet. 5. 2.* They must declare as much as possible, that in the midst of earthly enjoyments, they are heavenly minded, and live above them. *They are holy men of God, and therefore must flee those things,* *1 Tim. 6. 11. 2 Pet. 1. ult.* and follow after heavenly. Eleventhly, They must be singular and eminent in *gravity and solidity*: they must

must not be vain, light and frothy talkers, and of foolish jesting Spirits and carriages, but grave and serious, *1 Tim. 3. Twelfthly*, They should be *apt to teach*, set forward and entertain holy and profitable discourses, as they have opportunity; which will not now be easily found, I fear, amongst professors. However, they should be alwaies ready, apt and willing to do their duty, although others are not to do theirs, *1 Pet. 5. 2. 1 Tim. 3. 2. Eph. 4. 29. Col. 4. 6. Thirteenthly*, They should be *well armed with Wisdom, Faith and Patience*, to endure and stand fast against all oppositions and Temptations, and to bear up under all the great discouragements they may meet withall from friends and foes; for they will be tryed by both. Hence the Apostle charges *Timothy*, to *follow after Faith and Patience*, *1 Tim. 6. 11.* and in *1 Tim. 4. 12.* says he, *be thou an Example to the Believers, in Faith, &c.* Therefore they should come to their work well armed and fenced with Faith and Patience: for it will be tryed to the utmost, as sad experience shews. *Fourteenthly*, They should be eminent and singular in *setting up high and noble ends in their eyes and hearts*, in their office and work in the Church. The great motives, aims and ends of their hearts and Souls, should be to please and honour Jesus Christ, their Lord and Master, and to edifie and profit his Church, *Acts 20.* These are some of the necessary qualifications, that all Pastors of Churches should bring with them, and labour to grow and encrease in them, when they are there.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, They must be qualified with *holy and blamelesse conversations and carriage* also: These are in part described in the *1 Tim. 3. Tit. 1.* and elsewhere in the *Epistles of Paul to Timothy and Titus*; in the *Acts*, and other *Scriptures*. And it must needs be so, namely, that they be singular in all manner of *holy conversation and Godlynesse*, *1 Tim. 4. 7. But exercise thy self unto Godliness*; for they are appointed and set in the Church to be their Lights and Guides, to be *Examples* to Believers, and all men, *1 Tim. 4. 12. Mat. 5. 16. 1 Pet. 5. 3, &c.* They will by blamable walkings, more dishonour Jesus Christ and his Gospel; more grieve and afflict the hearts of good Men; scandalize and harden the hearts of evil men, than a hundred times as many private Christians, and pull great reproach and contempt upon the Ministry of Christ in his Churches. They are more eyed and observed, and are nearer Jesus Christ than others are, and greater things are expected from them than from others. Therefore they should shine forth in all Grace, and be found (though not without their failings) in the practice of every good Work, as men, Christians and Ministers of Christ. It is not enough for them that they be not such and such negative professors, but they must be such, and so in practical holynesse. They must not only abstain from that which is evil and forbidden, but they must do that which is good and commended; otherwise they cannot be blamelesse. But if they are indeed of such Spirits (as aforesaid) they will be of holy and blamelesse conversations, and

and walk as Gospel, real, true Lights & Guides before all: but if they want these heart and internal qualifications, they will not long (if at all) be blamelesse walkers. If they are of proud, peevish, cross and fretful; of *severe*, angry and *wrathful* Tempers and carriages, they are not blamelesse. If they are of *hot*, *testy*, *fiery*, *rash* and *quarrelsome* Tempers and Carriages, they are not blamelesse. If they are *Backbiters* and *Defamers* of men, or *Hearers* and *Receivers* of evil reports against good men, they are not blamelesse. If they are covetous worldly persons in their words and deeds, they are not blamelesse. If they are excessive in their cloaths, houses, eating or drinking, they are not blamelesse. If they are censorious and rash Judges of others, they are not blamelesse. If they are *cheaters* or *detainers* of others dues from them, they are not blamelesse. If they are vain and light persons, and given much to frothy idle talk and jestings, or to Idleness, they are not blamelesse. If they are carelesse of, and negligent in relative duties, and the worship of God in their families, they are not blamelesse. If they are not diligent in their callings, and works, but are addicted to walk abroad, sleep, or otherwaies spend away their pretious time, vainly, and unprofitably, they are not blamelesse. I might instance in many more, but that I study brevity, as well as Truth. The Ministers of Christ must not only be free from the practice of such and such Sins, but they must be eminent and singular in the practice of all duties incumbent on them, towards God
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and men also, (unavoidably infirmities excepted.)

Sixthly, They must also have, and be endued with *natural Gifts*, as ability of body, and the *Gift of utterance*. For although a man may have a great stock of Graces, Gifts, and Truths laid up in his head and Heart, yet if he want abilities of Body or speech to utter, & plainly declare them unto others, how can he profit the Church, or minister to their edification? (which is the great end of those Gifts, &c. and the Ministry.) Therefore they must not be only qualified within, but without also; they must be able to *speak as they ought*, Eph. 6. 20. as well as to judge as they ought to judge of, and understand divine matters.

Sevently, *They must be sound in the Faith* too, For if they be leavened with corrupt Doctrine, and their Faith and Judgments tainted with it, they may easily corrupt and leaven the Church of Christ, by sowing such *Tares* and *stinking Weeds*, as all the men in the world will never be able to pull out again. *A little leaven*, (of corrupt Doctrine) *leavens the whole Lump*, Gal. 5. 9. And when once false doctrines are got into the Head, they will quickly defile and corrupt the whole heart and conversation. And therefore to prevent such evils in the Churches, the Apostles laboured exceedingly with the Churches, and as soon as they perceived any Tares of corrupt doctrine sown in the Churches, they presently endeavoured the pulling of them up, and weeding of them out, either by preaching or writing. And *Paul* charged

charged *Titus* to see that Teachers were sound in the Faith and Doctrines of the Gospel, *Tit.* 1. 9. 13. and that they *speake sound Doctrines*, chap. 2. 1, 2. that they were of *sound Minds*, *2 Tim.* 1. 7. and also, *that they hold fast the form of sound Words*, *vers.* 13. and also wishes all corrupt and unsound Teachers *cut off*, *Gal.* 5. 12. Therefore they must not be erroneous in their Faith and Judgments, but sound in the Faith of the Gospel; that are (together with the aforesaid particulars) rightly qualified Ministers of Christ. And you may be sure, that Jesus Christ hath more care of, and respect unto his Name, Gospel, and Churches, which *he hath purchased with his Blood*, than to set over them erroneous and corrupt Teachers.

Eighthly, *Humane learning is not to be slighted and despised in a Minister*, (as it is too much by some, who know not the good of it) for although the Word and Spirit of God can sufficiently prepare & qualifie a man for the Ministry without it, yet experience shews, that it is singularly useful to holy men, in their Ministerial Work. It helps to make them more able men, though not Christians: it is usefull to their heads (who know how to use it) if not to their Hearts: it is a good servant to wait on Divinity, though a bad master when it is exalted above it, (as to many shamefully and sinfully do.) It is well known, that we come to the knowledge of the Spirit and mystery of divine Truths, by the letter wherein it is held forth; and we come to understand the mind and intention of a Superior, by the words
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he speaks to us: so that if we understand not his words, we cannot know his mind and will, or what he would have us believe, do, or receive. And is it not the same with respect to the Word of God? how can we know his mind and will concerning us, but by his Word? and how by his Word or Words, except we understand their sense, meaning and signification, what they do import and hold forth to us? and can any deny but that humane learning is useful towards the helping of our understandings to find out the sense, meaning and intended design of them? It is in vain to say, that the holy Spirit will do that well enough without humane learning: for did the holy Spirit ever teach an English man to understand *Hebrew* or *Greek*, (the Tongues wherein the Scriptures of God were written) without humane help? or can an English man because he understands English, therefore understand the Scriptures in these Tongues? what if the most of men that are learned do abuse it? shall it therefore be despised? will any wise man despise wine, that good creature of God, because men abuse it? and shall we despise humane learning, that good Creature of God, because it is abused? It is given to help and perfect men, and may be exceedingly usefull to them in publique service for God and his Church, as well as for a State or Commonwealth; and such as are greatned and lifted up in their own conceit, slight and despise others who are not as learned as themselves, (as they suppose) do thereby divert it from its real use and end, turn it into sin and shame,
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and abuse it as much as drunkards do good wine, and they shall at last rue for it. But what then? shall learning be slighted and despised? God forbid. How should we have known the Scriptures, had there not been learned men to translate them into our native Language? surely you that despise humane learning, should rather blesse God all your daies, that he was pleased to give it unto men for your good, and for the propagation of his Gospel. And I say further, that if humane learning be desirable and usefull unto men, then it cannot be prejudicial, but very helpful unto the Ministers of the Gospel: for I think, that they will and may make as blessed and holy improvements of it, as other men can do, I find (indeed) no small error on both hands; the unlearned in contemning and despising it, as a vain uselesse thing, especially in a Minister of the Gospel; and the learned in magnifying it above the skies, setting it on the Throne, and the holy Spirit, and grace at the foot-stool; disdaining and contemning the unlearned, and making it one of the most absolutely necessary qualifications of a Minister of the Gospel, *when indeed, the Scripture doth not*: Which with other abuses of it, by some, hath brought it under Reproach. But yet I say still, the fault is not in humane learning, but in the men that abuse it: And therefore let it be loved, used and respected in its place. Let those that have it see they use it well, and carry themselves more humbly with it, towards others; and those that have it not, forbear speaking evilly and reproachfully of that which they understand not.

Ninthly,

Ninthly, *They must be qualified with satisfaction in their own hearts and consciences, that they are moved by, and called of God to take upon them the work of the Ministry, and that in such a place; that they may go forth and enter upon it in Faith, hope and obedience, as they ought to do.* Without this, all the rest of the aforesaid qualifications will not serve the turn; except they can probably conclude upon sufficient Grounds that they hear their Lord saying (as it were) unto them, Go you into such a vineyard and work; lay out and improve my Talents there, in such a place, with such a People. Which said satisfaction, will be the result of many sighs, tears and cries; for so great a mercy will not be gotten (ordinarily) upon easier Terms, *Act. 13. 2, 3.* For it is certain, that men may run before they are sent of God, *Jer. 23. 21.* and it may be with a good intention too, as *Saul* seemed to have in offering Sacrifice, *1 Sam. 14.* and *Uzzah* in meddling with the *Ark*, as he did, *2 Sam. 6.* and men may judge them meet and ready for the work; yea call and give them importunate invitations to it, and yet God may not send them, nor bid them go. I think, that they may have the loud, strong calls of men, to minister to them, when God is not in it. Now it is probable, that there are some men, who are endowed with excellent Ministerial Gifts; who mind and concern themselves mostly, if not altogether with their external call from men, and do not once seriously consider, nor ask the question, if God say so too, or no; but away they go, without the internal call

or motion of the Spirit. And truly these are likely to succeed accordingly. I fear that God will say to them as in *Jer. 23. 32.* *They shall not profit this People.* They are gone before and without the Lord, and follow the voice of men and their own natural Genius, being drawn by some worldly allurements, but they shall not prosper, unless they repent of their disorderly walking. *David* would not go and possess the Kingdom of *Israel*, until he had asked it, and received answer from God, that he should, *2 Sam. 2.* and when God bid him go, he would first know where he should go, before he durst adventure to go to *Hebron*; although he was long before anointed King, and he had a great multitude of the *Israelites* with him, that doubtless had strongly invited him to the Government; yet he could not go and take it upon him, until God sent him, and bid him go. (2) There are others, who do wait for a call from God, to go forth to the work, but hang in doubt whether they should go, or whether God hath answered them, and these go forth uncomfortably and in part unwillingly. They are loath to tarry Gods time for a clear and satisfactory answer, and so go on with many doubts, fears and scruples of conscience; there being a war and contest in their hearts, between shall I, or shall I not: Whereas if they would pray importunately, and wait patiently the Lords time to answer, and satisfy them, they might go forth in peace with the blessings and presence of God. (3) There are some, who fast, pray, and cry, wait and watch for Answers, and will not stir

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until they have an Answer of peace and satisfaction from God ; (as *Paul* and *David*) and then they set forward with all possible chearfulness, hope and confidence: and these are the persons that *sh. ll finish the course of their Ministry with Joy*, and prosper in their work ; *Act. 20. 24.* that will do it *with Joy and not with Grief*, *Heb. 13. 17.* certainly, this qualification is absolutely necessary, namely, that they have a good measure of assurance, that God hath called and sent them into his Vineyard, to work there, as his Stewards and Ministers. For how can they preach as his Ministers, except they know that they are sent by him, & have his Authority inpowring them? *Rom. 10. 15.* the servants stood and waited for a mission from their Lord, and would not go, until they had it, *Matth. 20.* And there are many Reasons for it ; I will but name a few. (1) Because the work they have to do, is the Lords, not their own: and what have they to do to medle with it, until their Lord calls & sends them? otherwise he may say unto them, friends, what do you here in my Vineyard about my work and concernments? did I call or send you hither, or rather did you not come upon your own will and pleasure? (2) Because the Churches in which they work, are the Lords: and he will have his own appointed and designed servants in his own families and households, and none else, he alots and appoints the several works of his servants and the places where they shall work, and leaves it not to their own wills & choice, but as directed and guided, moved and carried forth by

by him. As God sent *Paul* to the *Gentiles*, and *Peter* to the *Jews*, so doth God now send such a man to such a Church, and another to another Church, to administer there, and if the great Lord and Master should find such a Servant here, as he did intend for an other place, how will he answer his being out of his own place? (3) Because their going forth and labouring in the *Vineyard*, must be *obediential Acts*. They must do it, not because it is their own will and choice, but the Lords, and that in obedience unto him. And how can they do that, except they have some good assurance that the Lord hath sent and called them? How can they obey the voice of the Lord, when they are not well satisfied, that they have heard and felt the Lord speaking to their hearts, in answer unto prayers? (4) Because they must go forth and labour, in dependence on, and expectation of him; to be with them: to help and assist them; to blesse and prosper them, to crown and succeed their endeavours, and to provide for them. Now, how can they do so, unlesse they know that God hath sent and imployed them in his work? (5) They must go forth and labour, in hope and expectation of divine acceptance, also. For God hath promised to accept the commanded work and service of his people, in obedience to his holy will. Therefore they must know that they are doing of, or about to do their Lords work, when, and where he would have them. (6) Because they are promised a reward; and they ought to believe and look for it, onely in the way of their duty, and no where else. And

how can any expect a reward for doing that, which for ought they know, is not their duty, at such a time, in such a place, in such a way? (7.) Because they ought to blesse, thank and praise God for imploying them in his so great work and service, *1 Tim.* 1. 12. which they cannot do unlesse they are sufficiently satisfied, of the Lords calling them to it.

Tenthly. As they should be satisfied in their own Souls, of the Lords calling and sending them into his Vineyard, so the Church to which they are sent should be satisfied of the same likewise; and they should find great and real acceptance in each others hearts. The Church should own and receive them, as sent by, and from Jesus Christ unto them, to do his work, and administer his holy Laws and Ordinances to them; and that as great and promised mercies and blessings for their good. Their union, communion and Spiritual Relation, must be founded in Love and strong affections one to another, and grounded upon real satisfaction in, and cordial acceptance one of another, as married together by Jesus Christ; and so make one intire body, and Temple. These are no light and insignificant matters, but very great and weighty (matters) indeed: They put themselves into each others hands, and become one anothers in the Lord; in which state and condition they must abide, and live together, until the Lord shall separate them by some extraordinary providence. For till then, they cannot part one from another, nor leave each other, no not with mutual

tual consents, at their own will and pleasure ; because they were joyned together by the will of God, as the chief and principal doer of it; and therefore no lower will and power can dissolve the knot, then that which at first did knit it. These Ministers must go and take up with the Church, as sent to them by Jesus Christ, and the Church must own and receive them as Christs choice and gracious gift unto them. And therefore they should be fully satisfied in each other, and find deep real Love. cordial acceptance and room in one anothers hearts : resolving to live, walk and continue together, in Love and Faithfulness, and in the constant practice of all duties to God and one another, before they do unite and engage together in a Church-Relation. For if they do not become one Holy Church and Communion, upon the account of Jesus Christ his joyning them, or calling them to own, accept and chuse one another in that Relation: If they be not congregated and united together, by, and upon the principle of Gospel-Love and Affection ; and if they enter not into, and continue in that state and Relation, Union and Communion together, in pursuance of the will and call of Christ, and in obedience to his command, they are never likely to continue long together in peace and comfort ; to have God dwell in, and walk with them, or to thrive and prosper. They may be able to make a comfortable Judgment of the Lords calling and joyning them together in love and mercy, thus ; or by these things. First, if the Glory of the Lord Jesus & their own Spiritual profit

and edification, lay deep in their hearts, and are their great and only ends in their uniting and joyning together. 2. If they have unfainedly and importunately asked counsel and conduct of God: committed the whole to his choice, and disposal, to make up, or hinder the match between them, as he pleased: and did indeed resign up their wills and concernments, wholly unto his Wisdome and Sovereign pleasure, to order, and determine them and for them, as he should think fit, in order to the said ends: and in their Prayers together and apart, have stood in an even ballance, waiting and expecting what the Lord would say and do in the case, to and for them. 3. And if after they have so done they find their hearts more and more enclined and knit one to another, (though still with a free and holy submission to the Will of God) and they find providence working for them without, by removing obstructions, and making the way plain for them: I think they may comfortably conclude that God hath sent and called them to joyn themselves together, and become a holy Temple in the Lord. For when all these things do concurr and fall in (as it were) together: undoubtedly it is of God, and by his special ordering and direction. It was God, that set up those holy ends and designs in their hearts. It was God that stirred up and moved their hearts so to pray and wait, *Psal. 10. 17. Rom. 8. 26. 27.* or they could never have so done it. It was God, that enabled them to lie down and submit their wills and judgments, to his. It was God that enclined their hearts to one
another

another, and that knit them together in Love, so as to chuse and accept of each other in that holy Relation: and it was God that made their way plain before them. And now what hinders, why they should not freely unite and joyn together in the Lord, and walk together as heirs of the Kingdome?

Eleventhly, All things and matters, in order to their Union and Communion together, and becoming a house or Church of God; and walking together as *Officers* and *Members*, in that State and Relation, being thus prepared and made ready for it: They should now appoint and mutually agree to set apart a day to perfect and compleat what is so well begun. And first they should call in the help and assistance of some other Church or Churches, especially the *Elders* of them (if they can), that they may see, and be satisfied of their proceedings, and give them the *right hand of fellowship*, Gal. 2. 9. and assist them in the *solemn setting apart of their Elders*, and help them with their Prayers. 2. They should seek the Lord by fasting and prayer, and entreat him in an extraordinary manner, to be with them; guide and direct them; bless and prosper them, in their proceedings: and in an especial manner for the Elder, or Elders they are about to chuse, and (in the Lord) to set over themselves, to feed them, and take the oversight of them: That God would give them a double portion of his Spirit, and furnish them more abundantly with his gifts, and special grace, and make them able *Ministers* of the New-Testament. That God would knit their hearts

so fast together in the bond of love, as that they may for ever live together in hearty love and peace; and that they may freely, constantly, and chearfully perform their respective duties to one another, according to the will of Christ. And this being done, they should now proceed to chuse and set apart their Elders. *I* mean the Church should appoint one of their Brethren, to express and declare that they have, and now in a more solemn manner, do elect and chuse out such a person or persons from among themselves, *Acts 6.* to be their *Elders* and *Teachers*, to rule, feed, watch over, and Minister to them in the name of the Lord, as persons fitted and sent to them by Jesus Christ, for that end and purpose, (as they humbly judge); and further they may declare, that they do thankfully and cordially receive and accept them for their Elders, as the gift of Christ unto them, for those ends and services. And when the said Elders are thus chosen and set apart, (as also ordained) then they may declare their hearty acceptance of the choice, and of the Church as their charge. And for their mutual satisfaction, and strengthening their hope and expectation of, and confidence in each other, as also for the faster knitting the Church and Elders together, *I* think it convenient (if not necessary) that they do mutually promise and covenant to one another, before God and men, that they will really and unfeignedly perform their respective works and duties one to another: Namely, such as Jesus Christ requires of them, according as he requires. And when these things are done, it may

may be convenient that the Officers or Messengers of other Churches, that are present, do declare that they approve of what is done by them, and own them as a Church of Christ, and their Elders, now set over them, as the Elders and Officers of Christ. Now, that the Church Congregated by the will of God, have power to chuse and approve of all the Officers that Jesus Christ hath given them, hath been shewed before, and therefore I shall say nothing of it here, but proceed.

Quest. What is the work of Pastors, Teachers or Elders, in a Church of Christ; or for what ends and purposes hath Christ set them there?

Ans. First, Their work is, and they are set in the Church by Jesus Christ to Preach his word, and to open and make known his mind and will unto them; and as they have opportunity and ability, to reveal the whole Counsel of God, *Acts. 20. 27, 28.* They are to Preach the word of God; not their own or others fancies and conceits, and that diligently, sincerely, frequently and faithfully, *1 Pet. 2. 2. 2 Cor. 2. 17. Prov. 27. 23. Acts. 18. 25. Math. 24. 45.* This they must do in season and out of season, *2 Tim. 4. 2.* They are to feed Babes, with Milk; and men, or grown Christians, with strong Meat, *Heb. 5. 12, 13, 14. 1 Cor. 3. 1, 2.* That is, to Administer and apply suitable and proper Truths to them, according to their capacities and conditions. They must earnestly beseech and entreat, as they see occasion, *2 Cor. 5. 20. 2 Cor. 6. 1: Reprove and rebuke Transgressors, with all Authority, 2 Tim. 4. 2. Tit. 2. ult.* They are to comfort the feeble-minded, and
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support the weak, 1 *Thef.* 5. They must study the Word, and their Churches Souls, cases and conditions, that they may rightly divide and present unto them seasonable food and physick, cordials and corratives; for they will need all, 2 *Tim.* 2. 15. and thereby *make full proof of their Ministry,* 2 *Tim.* 4. 5. This they must do publickly, and privately, as they have opportunity and ability, and that with all possible patience, wisdom and meekness, 2 *Tim.* 2. ult.

Secondly, As they must so attend to their Preaching work in the Church, *so likewise to their ruling work.* They have the Office, power of Preaching, and ruling from Christ, (not from the Church, or any other persons whatsoever; for they only elect, call, and set them apart to the exercise of that Power and Authority that Jesus Christ hath given them) all which they are to exercise and make use of in the Church, for their spiritual benefit, and the glory of Christ. That they have the power of rule, as well as of labouring in the word and Doctrine, is clear, 1 *Tim.* 5. 17. *Let the Elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour: especially, they,* (namely, such as have the ruling power also) *who labour in the word and Doctrine.* Which said ruling power consists, in requiring attention; in charging, commanding, appointing, rebuking and reproving: in calling together the Church, and dismissing them: in requiring speech and silence, in ordering and disposing of matters in the Church; in an authoritative way, examining matters, and calling persons to an account, and in admitting Members, and ex-

executing the Laws of Christ on offenders in the Church, &c. 1 Tim. 4. 11. 2 Tim. 4. 2. Titus 1. 13. Tit. 2. 15. Math. 24. 45. To this part of their work, office, and power they must attend; in the wise, seasonable exercise of it, as occasion is, or may be offered; without this authority of ruling (from Christ), they will be but lame Ministers, and never able to carry on their Ministry, to the glory of Christ; and the profit of the Church. And if they have not power to, and do not exercise the Authority, and execute the Laws of Christ; to see too, and require orderly walking of all the Members, and Authoritatively to deal with Offenders and Transgressors of his Laws; who hath power, or can do it? A Church of Believers, (as hath been shewed) is a Family, a Corporation, and household of God; and it is known to all men, that all Families, and incorporated bodies of men, do, or ought to live under, and submit unto the Laws, Orders, and Discipline of those Families, and Corporations whereunto they belong: and in order thereunto, they have such among them, as have power and Authority to exercise Discipline, and execute Laws; to Command, Order and Appoint, what, where, when, and how matters and things shall be done amongst them, for the good of the whole. I think that the Discipline of a Family, or Church of God, ought most carefully to be attended too, and practised; and who shall exercise it, but his Ministers and Overseers? Act. 20. 17, 28. It is true, that Christ hath set in his Church also, another sort of Rulers, which I think are said to be

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helps, to which *Governments* is joyned, 1 Cor. 12. 28. (Ἀντιλήψεις, κυβερνήσεις) That is, (as I judge), God hath chiefly entrusted the ruling power in the Church, in the hands of his Teaching Elders, and impowered others, to help and assist them; namely, such as are called *Ruling Elders*, in 1 Tim. 5. 17. For they have need enough of such helps, in their well governing a Church of Christ. (Of which more afterward) : This is another part or parcel of Teaching-Elders work.

Thirdly, Their work is to *Watch*; *I say to watch over the Church*. They are the Churches *Watchmen*, to take the oversight of them, and to make inspection into them, Acts 20. 17, 28, 31. 2 Tim. 4. 5. 1 Pet 5. 2. They are to watch the Wolves and Devil, that would come amongst them to sow false Doctrines, and Divisions, to the breaking of their Peace, and spoiling their Communion, and that would corrupt their faith and leaven their judgments; and drive them away from the Sheep-fold, Acts. 20. 29, 30, 31. Tit. 1. 10, 11, 12, 13. They must also watch their walkings and conversations, and see if they are such, as becomes the Gospel of Christ, Phil. 1. 27. or whether they be reprobable and scandalous: so also, if they keep to, and practise their several duties to God, and one another, or neglect them; that they may from Christ encourage the obedient, and rebuke the negligent, 1 Thes. 5. 14. They must also watch and make inspection into the state and condition of their Souls, and see how matters go, or stand with them, that they may know how to administer Remedies to them

them, as their cases do require. They should enquire into their growth or decayes in grace, whether the word & Ordinances of Christ do profit or disprofit them; & as much as possible, they should know what use and improvement they make of their Gospel-mercies: as also their Tryals and Temptations, their faith and judgments, whether they continue sound and sincere. The Elders of a Church of Christ must not only carry about the names of watchmen, but they must do, and attend with diligence, the real and full work of watchmen: they are set by him upon his walls, to watch and inspect his Church: which indeed, is no easie work, but full of care, trouble, pains and difficulty. And therefore 'tis no wonder the Apostle says, *who is sufficient for these things?* for they are to take care of all the spiritual and soul-concernments, of the whole Church.

Fourthly, They are to *endeavour the preservation of all the Truths and Ordinances of Jesus Christ amongst them*, and to maintain them, in their power and purity in the Church. When they know any truth, or matter of faith, or practice, doubted of, or called into question by any in the Church; they must with all possible care, wisdom, faithfulness and diligence, endeavour the removal of the doubts and questions, maintain the Truths, and establish all the Members of the Church in them: for should the errours at any time sown among them, be let alone, and suffered to take Root in their heads, they will eat into the heart like a *Canker*, or (γάγγραινα) *Cancer*, or *Gangrene*. To prevent which, the Apostle charges *Timothy*,
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and Titus, and all Elders of Churches (in them) to hold fast the form of sound words, 2 Tim. 1. 13. And to hold fast the faithful word, Tit. 1. 9. That by sound Doctrine they may convince Gain-sayers. And this was alwayes Paul's care and practice; (as was shewed) either to prevent the corrupting of Truth, and mens Souls with errors, or to overthrow and root them up, where they were entertained: Thus the Ministers of Christ ought to do now, and that for Christ, his Truths, and Churches sakes.

Fifthly, They must administer all Church-Ordinances, with all possible diligence, care, zeal and faithfulness. It is their work and place to do it, and therefore they must not be careless or negligent; but watch, seek for and observe all opportunities for the doing of it, that the Church suffer no detriment by their neglects, which they will quickly do, if neglected, as experience shews. They must not only care to Preach well, but to administer all other Appointments of Christ also, in their seasons; for all the Ordinances of Jesus Christ, are the Churches food and provisions, and the means and way appointed by him, for the Communicating and dispensing of his Grace, Spirit, yea and himself unto their Souls: and indeed without the Ordinances of the house, the house or Church cannot subsist; and they are the authorized Stewards of the house, to give the Lords Household, all their provisions in due season, that they may be fat and flourishing under his keeping and Donations, 1 Cor. 4. 1, 2. Mat. 24. 45. Psal. 92, 12, 13, 14. 1 Tim. 3. 5. Every Church Ordinance is a Golden Pipe to
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convey light, life and holiness into Believers hearts, and as Breasts to convey nourishment to the Soul. They are spiritual Ladders to carry the hearts and graces of Believers up to Heaven, and lodge their minds and affections there; and they are as the *Ark, where God will come and meet his people*, Esa. 64. 5. Therefore they must be carefully, frequently, and holily dispensed and administred by them, who are set there to do it.

Sixthly, *They must stand between God and the Church, with holy hearts, hands and tongues lifted up to Heaven for the Church, or in their behalf, and that privately and publickly.* For their work and office, is not only to Minister to them from Christ; but they are to present their wants, desires, and gratitude to God for them also: which is no easie work to do. They must pray and wrestle with God for them, as for their own Souls, and carry them upon their hearts and souls in their secret addresses to God, and plead with God importunately for them, as they do for their own Souls: and that not as Believers only, but as their Teachers and spiritual Fathers also. Certainly, this is one great part of their work and business, and therefore they may not neglect it, but are bound to be diligent in it, in secret: and in publick, when present with them, they must bless them, and the word and seals, ministerially, and that by virtue of their place, office, and power in the Church, 1 Cor. 10. 16. *Numb.* 6. 23, 24, 25, 26. Thus blessed *Paul* was much in the practice of, namely, in presenting the Churches cases to God, and wrestling with God

God for them, *Phil. 1. 9. Col. 1. 9. 2 Thes. 1. 11. Wherefore we pray alwayes for you, So Col. 1. 3. 1 Thes. 3. 10.*

Seventhly, *Resolve doubts and cases, that trouble any of the Members of the Church, when they are presented to them, if they are matters worthy consideration.* They must study cases of Conscience, and such doubts and scruples as may arise in the hearts or heads of their people, that they may be ready to apply some satisfying Medicine unto them. They are to study persons, and their cases, and maladies, as well as the Scriptures: for they must alwayes be able to apply, and rightly to use a word in season to weary, troubled, & burthened Souls, as well as to Preach publicly, and promiscuously to all, from a studied, composed subject. This work of Teachers in the Church, is no light ordinary matter: it will shew what they are, and try their learning and abilities for their work, more than any thing else. It is a special gift of God, and an evidence of an able spiritual Physician indeed, who can find out spiritual Diseases of mens Souls, and readily apply proper Remedies to them, that can rightly *speake a word in season to him that is weary: Esa. 50. 4. and comfort the feeble-minded, 1 Thes. 5. 14.* The Lord Jesus, and Paul, were much exercised and imployed in this work, and so should Teachers now, as occasion is offered. *For the Priests lips should preserve knowledge, and the people should seek the Law at their mouths, Mal. 2. 7.* They are given to the Churches, to be their spiritual Nurses and Physicians, for the cure and health of their Souls; and therefore they

they must administer Physick and Cordials unto sick and pained Souls, in private, as well as in publick.

Eighthly, That they may discharge their Ministerial work, as becomes the Ministers of Christ; *They must exercise themselves in reading and studying.* They must give themselves to reading, and studying the Scriptures, the works and providences of God; as also their own experiences: and they must read, search, and endeavour all they can to know the states, cases, conditions, and wants of their own particular flocks: that they may *make full proof of their Ministry*, 2 Tim. 4. 5. *Divide the word of Truth aright*, 2 Tim. 2. 15. Speak words in season to all sorts, (especially) to weary and burthened Souls, *Esa. 50. 4.* And that they may both *save themselves, and those that hear them*, 1 Tim. 4. 16. Ministers of the Gospel must be continually lying in, as well as lying out: they must furnish themselves with Grace, Truth, and Experiences, that they may Communicate unto others out of the *good Treasure of their hearts.* Their hearts, heads and lips must be filled with varieties of Divine and Heavenly matters, that they may freely and readily impart of their receivings to every ones needs, *Mal. 2. 7.* Their Lord and Master charges them to *give attendance to reading*, 1 Tim. 4. 13. *To Meditation*, 1 Tim. 4. 15. And to *study*, 2 Tim. 2. 15. They must *search the Scriptures*, Joh. 5. 39. *Hold fast the form of sound words*, 2 Tim. 1. 13. *And inspect their people*, Pro. 27. 23. 2 Tim. 4. 5. Acts 20. 28. They must not look for immediate Inspirations

ons, nor to be furnished with all needful supplies from Heaven, for the discharge of their office and Ministerial work in the Churches of Christ, by the spirit; but in and by their diligent use of Gods means. God that appoints and promises the end, appoints and directs us to, and in the use of the means, leading to the obtainment of that end. The end directed to, in and by the said means, is the supply of Grace, Gifts, and all necessary and profitable ministerial abilities, for such as Christ puts into the work, and office, of teaching and ruling in his Churches. Therefore they may not divert to, or take up with any other Employments, that may any way impede or hinder them in, or of the aforesaid duties; But in case of necessity.

Ob. *But did not Paul work with his hands, and labour in other businesses; and exercise himself in worldly and secular matters, after he was engaged in the work of the Ministry? And if so; why may not other men do the same as well as he?*

1. You saw before, what ordinary Elders ought to do, and are bound to attend unto in their places and offices, namely, to give themselves wholly to the work of the Ministry, which they had received in the Lord, Col. 4. 17. *That they fulfill it*: that they attend to Study, Reading, Meditation, Exhortation, Doctrine, 1 Tim. 4. 13, 15. 2 Tim. 2. 15. 2 Tim. 4. 5. *And that they wait on the Altar*, 1 Cor. 9. 13.

2. Examples must not be taken and advanced against precepts. Paul was an extraordinary Officer or Minister; his work and power

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was every where, where the Lord called him to Preach : he was not a particular fixed Elder, or Pastour to one single Church, neither was he bound or necessitated to attend to reading, studying, &c. as ordinary Ministers are. Moreover, *Paul* and other Apostles, had their office, power, their abilities and furnitures for their work, immediately from Christ in an extraordinary way and manner, which ordinary officers (now) have not.

3. *Paul* laboured not with his hands, or neglected his Ministerial work, but when necessitated thereunto : and the Apostles at *Jerusalem*, *Act. 6.* tells us, *That it was unreasonable, that they should leave the word of God and serve Tables.*

4. Ordinary Pastours or Elders of Churches, do find that their so attending to their work (in their Studies) as commanded, absolutely necessary, for the discharge and well performance of the work their Lord hath given them to do ; and experience shews beyond all contradiction, that the most studious holy Ministers, are the most powerful and profitable in their Ministry.

5. The great and rich provisions that God hath made for them, in their faithful attendance to their work in the Churches, fully proves and declares what they should do and attend unto. God hath commanded their Hearers to provide carnal things for them ; yea to Communicate to them in all good things, that they may attend on their work, and wait at the Altar without distraction, *Gal. 6. 6. 1 Cor. 9. 6. 15.*

Rom. 15. 27.

Ninthly, *They must be eminently holy and righteous in all manner of Conversation. They are Lights, and therefore they must shine as such in the World. They are the Salt of the Earth, and therefore they must be of savory Spirits and practices, Matth. 5. 13, 14, 15, 16. Ministers of the Gospel are given for, and commanded to be examples to their Flocks, 1 Tim. 4. 12. 1 Pet. 5. 3. They are indispensibly bound to imitate their Master, and to teach, lead and conduct them in holiness to Heaven, as well by their walkings and Conversations, as by their Ministry: that they may safely and comfortably follow them. Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ, 1 Cor. 11. 1. 1 Cor. 4. 16. 2 Thes. 3. 7.*

— Surely, such as Christ hath set in his Churches, to feed, nourish, comfort, strengthen, instruct and build up his people; to conduct, lead and guide them in the way of Gospel-holiness to everlasting happiness; should be singular in practical Godliness themselves. They should be singular in knowledge, faith, patience, self-denial, Goodness, meekness, charity, humility, tender-heartedness, faithfulness, and usefulness in the World. They ought to live out their own Doctrine, and confirm it, by conforming their carriage, words and actions thereunto. They must be clear of all Vices, and eminent in all Vertues, that they may adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, and encourage men to follow their steps. For they are not set in the Churches, only to teach, and verbally to Minister to them, but to be Patterns of Piety also, Tit. 2. 7. They must carry themselves

selves gravely, soberly, wisely, seriously, and holily, towards, and before all men; that those who seek occasion against them, may find none; but on the contrary they may be convinced of, and report that God, his fear, love, faith and spirit is in them of a Truth, 1 Cor. 14. 25.

And as they must seriously mind, and practice the matter of their work and duty, or what they are to do, and set in the Churches for; so they must carefully mind the manner of it too. (1) In all their Ministrations and Walkings, they must regard and have their eye on their Lords will and appointment. *Teaching them to observe what ever I command you*, Math. 28. ult. They must not impose their own Wills and Dictates, and thereby *make themselves Lords over God's Heritage*, 1 Pet. 5. 3. They are the Servants and Stewards of Christ, not to make Laws for, and impose them on his Household; but to acquaint them with their Master's Laws, exhort and perswade them to keep and observe them, as he commands, and to execute them on Offenders. (2) They must be diligent and constant in their Work. They must not be *Loyterers*, but *Labourers*, & be examples to their Flocks, by shewing all diligence and faithfulness in their work, *Act. 18. 25. 1 Tim. 5. 17. Prov. 27. 23.* (3) They should attend too, and perform their work readily, willingly, and chearfully, not grudgingly, 1 Pet. 5. 1, 2. 1 Cor. 9. 17. They must be *apt to Teach*, 1 Tim. 3. 2. and willing to Communicate. If all Believers should so perform all their works, much more should Ministers; They

should account their Ministerial work their privilege, not their burden, and carry themselves accordingly in it. (4) They must alwayes have in their eye the *ends* of their work and office, and prosecute, intend, and design them with all *Gospel sincerity*. They must not take their office on them, nor do their work for *filthy Lucre*; 1 *Tim.* 3. 8. 1 *Pet.* 5. 2. nor to honour and exalt themselves, but to honour, please and serve Christ their Lord, and to profit and edifie his people, and that with all possible integrity and uprightness of heart, 2 *Cor.* 2. *ult.* For if these ends be not upper-most in their eyes and hearts; in their desires, choice, aimes and intentions in their Ministrations, it is certain they are not called of Christ, nor qualified for Church-work, and they shall not prosper in it, be owned and blessed by him, nor profit his people: Thus briefly of the work, and duty, of teaching Elders or Pastors to the Churches over which the Holy Ghost makes them Overseers. Now I shall briefly shew you the work and duty of Churches to their Pastors or Elders, who faithfully and diligently labour in the word and Doctrine among them.

CHAP. VI.

Wherein the Duties of Church-Members to their Pastours, or teaching Elders, are clearly opened and declared from Scripture.

Q. **H**ow ought Church-Members to behave themselves towards their Pastours, or teaching Elders? or what are their works and duties towards them?

Ans. It is the will and appointment of the Lord Jesus, the King & head of his Churches, that they should carry and behave themselves towards them in heart and practise, as to his Ministers and Embassadors, who come to them in his name, by his Mission, Authority, and Commission, with his Gifts and Grace; upon his Errand and Business, as also for their Souls profit. They bear his Image, wear his Livery, do his work, and serve his Interests in the Churches. And therefore he that slighteth or despiseth them, slights and despiseth him and his Father too; *Luk.* 10. 16. and he or they, that receive them that love, honour & carry it well to them, because they are his, sent of him, Commissioned and qualified by him to serve and honour him in the Churches; they do thereby receive, honour and love Christ himself, *Gal.* 4. 14. They receive, honour and love Jesus Christ, in and by receiving, honouring and loving them as such; and whatever good they do them, or whatever respect they

shew them (as such), the Lord Jesus takes it as done to himself, Matth. 10. ult. Matth. 25. Therefore all Church-members ought to carry and behave themselves well towards them, and amongst other things in these particulars.

1. *They ought to love them;* I say to love them, and that with all cordial tender affection. They must not love them as they do other Saints of God, only; but they must have singular love for, and shew special love unto them, as Christs Embassadors, and their Ministers, 1 Thes. 5. 12, 13. *And we beseech you Brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you: And to esteem very highly in love for their works sake.* They must be loved on several accounts. 1. As good men, and living Members of Christ; and so we are to love them as fellow-Brethren, as we do other private Members. 2. It is the will and appointment of Christ, that they be loved as his Embassadors and Commissioners, as his Stewards and Officers, gifted and sent forth by him, about his concerns in his Churches, to do his work and business; and as representing him, by officiating in his Name, by his Authority, and doing his Message. 3. They ought to be loved as your Ministers, Guides, Feeders, and Overseers: as sent unto you from Christ, and dispensing the bread of life, and the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven to you, declaring the Counsel of God, and administering his holy appointments to you for your present comfort, establishment and growth in grace, and for your eternal happiness hereafter, *esteem them very highly in love for their works sake.*

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These are some of the Reasons, why they should be loved more than any other Believers; namely, because they are sent, Authorized, Graced, Gifted and qualified by Christ, do his work, represent him, stand in his stead, (2 Cor. 5. 20.) and as they are his Ministers for good to you. Well then, mind your duty, and the will of Christ in this matter, and love them sincerely and heartily; strongly and fervently, fruitfully and constantly; for they love you, study, pray and labour to do you good. And know that if you do not love them, you do not love Christ, whose they are, whom they represent and serve. And if you hate, slight and despise them, you do hate, slight and despise Christ himself in them.

Secondly, *It is the will and appointment of Christ, your duty to honour and respect, to reverence and esteem them, in their faithful diligent discharge of their Trust, and performance of their work amongst you.* They are the Embassadors and Commissioners of your great Lord and King, and sent by him from Heaven to you, (as was shewed) 2 Cor. 5. 20. Eph. 4. and that about most high and honourable work, yea the highest work and service that Creatures are capable of in this World. They come from, and are sent to you by the King of Kings, from Heaven, and therefore they must be honoured. They are his Embassadors and Commissioners, and therefore you must honour them. They are sent and come to you, as with his Image of Authority, so of Grace, Gifts, and Holiness; and therefore you must honour them. They are sent by Christ to you, on, and for

for the service of your Souls; and therefore you must honour them: and they represent Christ, and stand in his stead to you, and therefore you must honour them. They do give up themselves to be your servants, and thereby do honour you, 2 Cor. 4. 5. and they chearfully serve the interest of your Souls, as your spiritual servants; and therefore you must honour them. Christ requires you to esteem them, and that is not all; *but to esteem them highly, yea very highly too*; 1 Thes. 5. 13. and therefore you must do it; Christ will not suffer you to slight or despise them, no more than Kings will endure that any should slight or despise their Embassadors. If you have low, base thoughts of them in your hearts, you slight and despise them. If you slight and despise their labours and administrations, you despise them. If you villifie and speak slightingly of them behind their backs, and devulge their supposed or real weaknesses, you despise them. If you carry your selves saucily, and imperiously before their face, in words, deeds, or deportments, you slight and despise them; and if you controul them, and disregard their Judgments, Censures, Admonitions or Reproofs, you slight and despise them; when you turn a deaf ear to their Counsels, Instructions and Exhortations, you slight and despise them; and when you disregard their power, Authority, and their exercise thereof in the name of Christ, you slight and despise them. In these and many other wayes and instances, Church-Members do not only neglect their indispensable duty of honouring their Teaching-Elders,

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but they do slight and despise them also. And they do not only slight and despise them, but (as was said) the Lord Jesus, his Laws, Image, work and Authority also. *For he that despiseth you, despiseth me* (says Christ) Luk. 10. 16. And by these and such like slighting, and contemptible words, and carriages towards them, they do greatly provoke and discourage them: they weaken their hands, and distract their minds, and so hinder them in their work. They are honoured by Christ, and honourable in his eye; and he strictly charges and commands his Churches to esteem them most, or very highly, and to give them double honour, 1 Tim. 5. 17. *Let the Elders that rule well, be counted worthy of double honour: especially, they who labour in the word and Doctrine. Give* (says the Apostle) *to every man his due, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour*, Rom. 13. 7. It is their due by the Law of Christ, and he expects you should give it to them: not as they are such or such men, but as his Embassadors, Ministers, &c.

Thirdly, *It is the will and appointment of Christ, that Churches should pray for their Pastours, or Teaching Elders, and that in a more than ordinary manner and measure; I mean, more than they do, or are bound to do for others*, 1 Thes. 5. 25. Heb. 13. 18. Rom. 15. 30. you must be earnest, and importunate wrestlers with God (at the Throne of Grace) for them, that God would pour out abundance of his holy spirit on them, and by his teachings, quicknings and anointings, make them able *Ministers of the New Testament, not of the Letter*

Letter (only) but of the spirit, 2 Cor. 3. 6. That they may open their mouths boldly, have the gift of utterance, and speak the Truth sincerely, clearly, impartially, and constantly *make known the mystery of the Gospel,* Eph. 6. 18, 19. Col. 4. 3. That they may be kept from Snares and Temptations, or be enabled to encounter them, and with the Sword of the spirit to overcome and conquer them: and that they may be eminent shining lights in the world. That they may be able to *divide the word aright,* diligent in, and faithful to their Trust. That they may be wise, zealous and glorious *Patterns of Piety & all Godliness,* and be kept *unspotted of the world*; and that they may abound in all grace, gifts, works of holiness and righteousness. That they may Preach powerfully and profitably, and in all their wayes, words and carriages *adorn the Gospel of Christ,* Tit. 2. 10. That they may be found in the faith of the Gospel, and hold fast the profession of the faith without wavering; *Preach sound Doctrine,* clearly, plainly, and closely, Tit. 2. 1. and in all things approving themselves the true Ministers of Christ. That God would give them the spirit of Discipline and Government, for the order and well being of the Churches, and the orderly management of their concerns, and that they may in all things walk by their Lords Rules, and aim at, design and uprightly intend his glory, and the profit of his people, and all others that hear them. There are many reasons inforcing this duty on them to your Pastours: I'll name a few, 1. Because it is the will of God that you should do so,

so, as the aforesaid Scriptures shew. 2. Because they stand in need of your earnest prayers. If the Apostles themselves did stand in need of the Churches prayers, much more must ordinary Teachers need them. Their work is hard and difficult, *who is sufficient for it*, 2 Cor. 2. 16. Their discouragements are many and great, and their Temptations many, strong and powerful. They have mysteries to unfold continually, and they have stronger Temptations to grapple with all, than others have; therefore they should have your strongest and most importunate prayers. Little do Churches know what they see, feel, and experience in their work, and therefore are apt to imagine, that their Teachers have an easie and sweet life of it, and stand in little need of their assistance. But surely they are mistaken; for there is no work in the world, so full of care and trouble as a conscientious Minister is, nor any that requires more diligence, circumspection, watchfulness and faithfulness than his. They work and labour in Divine Mysteries; and they work for Christ and Souls. Their matters lye above the reach of carnal and meer rational understandings; above the reaches of humane Arts and Sciences, and they are alwayes consulting and conversant about new matters and things. Oh, what need have they of the Churches prayers! 3. Because the Churches profit and Souls benefit, is much concerned in their Teachers Administrations. For God ordinarily speaks to the Churches hearts, through or by their hearts, as well as by their mouths. The more they have of Christ,
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Grace, Truth, and the Spirit of Christ, the more powerful, spiritual and profitable they will be in prayer, Preaching, and in all other Ministrations unto them, *Act. 14. 1.*

Fourthly, It is the will of Christ, and their indispensable duty to know, obey, and submit themselves to their Teaching Elders or Pastours Authority, Teaching, Government, and to all their regular and orderly Ministrations in the Lord. The Church owes them subjection and obedience; and that as they are set over them by Christ, and by him made their Teachers and Rulers, and sent by him to take the charge and oversight of them, and to Administer his holy Ordinances to them in his name, for their good, Heb. 13. 7, 17. Remember them that have the Rule over you (or are Guides unto you, as the words also signifie). Obey them that have the Rule over you, and submit your selves; for they watch for your Souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you. Without Government and Governours; power and Authority; Laws and Orders, and without subjection and obedience, in and of the Members of all sorts of Corporations and Societies of men in the world, whether civil or Ecclesiastical, they will be, but confused Babels, and Babels: There will be, can be nothing but confusion and every evil work, as James speaks, Chap. 3. 16. If they are Rulers, and have Authority from the Lord Jesus to appoint, order and command, as 'tis clear they have, (or they are but shadows or cyphers,) 2 Thes. 3. 4, 6. 1 Tim. 4. 11. Tit. 2. ult. then they may,
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yea they ought to appoint, order and command, as they see occasion, for the profit and well being of the Church; in pursuance of their work and trust. And if so, then the Church and all the Members thereof, are indispensibly bound to yield all free, hearty, willing, and chearful subjection and obedience to them, without grudging, quarrelling, or irregular gain-saying, that is, they are to eye the will and authority of Christ in, and expressed by them: and so to conform to it, as it is Christs, not theirs. They must obey them not as gifted men, but as the *Embassadours, Ministers and Officers* of Christ, and it is Christ, and his will and Authority in them, that must be the object of their obedience and subjection. The neglect whereof is, when through carelesness or wilfulness, no less than disobedience too, yea Rebellion against the Lord Christ himself, *Luk. 10. 16, 17. Col. 3. 23, 24.* Great was the love and care of Christ, as the head and King of his Churches, in providing Lawes, Rules, and Orders, as also in Authorizing and sending some to execute them, for their spiritual good, and his glory. And therefore when Church-Members do slight, neglect, disobey, and practically despise them; they do thereby slight, contemn and despise the love, care and Authority of Christ; and Christ accounts it so, although those teaching Rulers are not Apostles, but ordinary Officers, as *Luk. 10. 16, 17.* shews when the Lord Jesus went to Heaven, *he gave gifts to men, (viz.) Ministers, and Ministerial abilities to them, for the work of the Ministry, for the perfecting of the Saints, &c.*

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Eph. 4. 10, 11, 12. Then he delegated his Ministerial power to men, promised to provide such for his Saints, and to furnish them with his own gifts, *yea to be with them himself, unto the end of the world, Math. 28. 18, 19, 20.* Wherefore then, the Churches of Christ should receive, submit to and obey them (in a sense) even as Christ himself, as they are Authorized, gifted, granted and sent by him, in and about his message, work and service, in all their lawful commands and appointments, and regular Ministrations in and for the Churches. *He that receiveth you, receiveth me* (says Christ) of the 70. Disciples he sent to Preach, *Luk. 10. 16. Math. 10. 40.* And Paul commends the Galatians, for receiving him, as an Angel of God, even as Christ himself, *Gal. 4. 14, 15.* and the same Apottle charges Titus, to speak and act in the Church with all Authority, charging all the Members also, *not to despise or slight him,* for, or in his so doing, *Tit. 2. 15.* If not to despise or slight him, then to honour, submit to, and obey him, as Christs and their Minister. Well then! do the Elders or Pastours of Churches carefully mind, and diligently labour in the Word and Doctrine, *1 Tim. 5. 17.* then all the Members of Churches are bound to obey them: to submit to, and wait on their Ministry; and not despise them and it, by deserting and withdrawing from it, in whole, or in part. (But more of this anon). 2. Do they appoint meetings, or call their Churches to assemble together for the celebration of any Ordinance of God, or to consult about the matters and concernments of the

the Church for their profit and Christs glory? they are bound in duty to do so (excepting in extraordinary cases that hinder them) as they will answer the contrary contempt to Christ, at their peril. They must not look on their practical conformity to it, as an indifferent matter, and stay at home, or come at their own will and pleasure, but actually obey such a call or summons as Christ's: not dispute it, but obey it: not in the pride of their hearts disdain it, but readily and chearfully subject to it. *Obey them that have the rule over you, for they watch for your Souls*; Heb. 13. 17. and be sure when they appoint such meetings, it is for the Churches advantage. 3. Do they appoint or require speech or silence in the Church, or any good Orders and Rules to be observed and kept in the name of Christ, and by his Authority? they are bound to obey them, without loading them, and obstructing their proceedings with Jangling disputes and oppositions. And as in these, so in all other matters, wherein the honour of Christ, the profit of the Church, or any Members thereof consists.

Rulers must see that they command and appoint, order and rule wisely, and faithfully, and keep close to their Commission; design and carry on Christ's holy ends in all: and as they must rule well, so all the Members ruled by them must obey well too. And when both do their duties in their places, the Lord Christ is honoured and pleased, and all the Church are, or may be profited and edified, and peace and truth promoted. But on the contrary, all confusion, disorder, and disturbances will ne-
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cessarily follow, as sad experience hath abundantly proved in this Land.

It is a clear and certain truth, (obvious to all men) that if some must rule, others must obey? And if some are appointed and commanded by the Great and absolute Sovereign to Rule and Govern well; then it must of necessity, be the indispensible duty of others to submit and obey well. All according and in obedience to the Authority and Sovereign will of their Great Law giver, the Lord Jesus. *Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit your selves,* is as indispensible a duty, as any you have to do; which I could abundantly confirm, by many Scripture-Reasons, had I room in this Discourse to enlarge on it.

Fifthly, *It is the will of Christ, and the Churches indispensible duty, to sympathize with their Teachers, to help and encourage them, to strengthen their hands, and comfort their hearts; and to do all they can to forward them in their work: that they may fulfil their Ministry, and do their whole duty with joy, and not with grief,*

Col. 4. 17. **Heb.** 13. 17. For whatever you do, for or against them, you do it for or against Christ himself, whose Embassadors and Officers they are to you, **2 Cor.** 5. 20. They have his Image of Authority stamp't on them, and are sent to you by himself about, and employed in his work amongst you. They labour, toyl and sweat, to serve and promote the interests and concernments of your Souls, and they make it their business to do you all the good they can: yea your happiness and welfare is much wrapt up in theirs. And therefore when
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you burden and discourage them, you hinder your selves of profit, and when you comfort, help and encourage them in their Ministerial work, you further your own happiness thereby. This is clearly intimated by the Apostle, in *Heb. 13. 17.* (before mentioned) *Obey them that have the Rule over you : for they watch for your Souls; that they may do it with joy, and not with grief :* Now mark his Reason, why ! because *that will be unprofitable for you.* The meaning is, the better you carry it towards your Teachers, who watch for your Souls, and the more profitable you are to them, the more profitable they will be to you : the more useful and comfortable you are to them, the more useful and comfortable they will be to you. We say, it is encouragement that makes a good *Oratour*, and much more doth encouragement from Christians, make (in a sense) good Ministers. There is a great deal of difference between working under discouragement and encouragement, discouragements from Christians do as it were unhinge Ministers, and cause them to Travel in pain, like Porters, with pressing heavy burdens on their backs. Their unkindnesses do greatly cumber and distract them, trouble and perplex them, discompose and deject them : they exceedingly weaken their hands, and sadden their hearts, and even make their lives a burden to them. And that because the true Ministers of Christ do so intirely and heartily love their people, as that, had they encouragement from them, they could freely spend, and be spent for them, *2 Cor. 12. 15.* and they do expect a great deal of hearty

love and kindness from them again, as well they may ; for that Christ requires it of them towards their Ministers, and they spend their time and strength in their service and concerns ; yea, and when they called them to take the oversight of them, they engaged so to do. But now being disappointed of their so reasonable expectation, they cannot but lay it to heart, and cry out of wrong, as *Paul* and *Jeremy* did. To prevent which, the Lord Jesus charges and strictly enjoyns all his people, to see they carry themselves well towards his and their Ministers. 1. By avoiding whatever may grieve or trouble them. 2. By giving them all possible encouragements. 1. Would you encourage and strengthen your Teachers in their work, then attend on their Ministry and Administrations, seriously, dutifully, conscientiously and constantly. The neglect of your so doing, doth greatly discourage them, sadden their hearts, and weaken their hands. The liberty some take (which Christ never gave them) to withdraw as they please, from their Ministers, and rambling up and down here and there, as they please ; either from their prejudice, pride, ignorance or giddiness of spirit : or from a wanton, lavish, vain spirit ; from their itching ears (as *Paul* speaks) 2 *Tim.* 4. 3. or from the Devil ; is exceedingly hurtful to them, as well as to the Souls of such Transgressors. So likewise when they come to their Administrations unseasonably, or untimely, and do there carry and demean themselves carelessly, indifferently and unreverently ; they

cast a stumbling block before them, and cause great offence to them.

Therefore, you must attend on their Ministry, as on Christs and your own Ministry, seriously, timely, conscientiously, diligently; freely, dutifully and constantly when they Preach and Administer: for that is your duty, and the contrary is your sin; which in time *will find you out*. For you by your so doing, walk disorderly, scandalously, irregularly, and contrary to the charge given you, *Heb. 10. 24. 25. not forsaking the Assembling of your selves together, as the manner of some is*. You walk out of your folds, and prodigally run out of the place where the providence of God hath set you, and commanded you to abide and worship him in, until he do by some extraordinary dispensation call you off, you expose your selves to great danger, and tempt the holy Spirit to withdraw his Divine influences from you: and I dare peremptorily affirm, that while any do so, they are back-sliding from God, and God is going off from them; that they shall never thrive nor prosper in Grace, nor have any Ordinances blessed to them; and though their wanton disorderly wayes seem right unto them, *yet they lead to death*, Prov. 14. 12. Moreover, such neglects in Church-Members tends directly to the breaking of the Churches of Christ, and all good Order, Peace and prosperity in them; and to the bringing in of all irregularities and confusion, to the great scandal of the Gospel; dishonour of Christ, offence of the faithful, and to the breaking of their Ministers hearts.

Which certainly will have bitterness in the end; although it may be pleasing to the offenders a while. Oh! how grievous must such courses of Church-Members needs be unto their Pastours? who have prayed, studied, and laboured to make good provision for them, to comfort and build up their souls in Christ, and that in hopes of finding them there in a readiness to receive it, when they come to hand it out to them; and then shall either find them gone, or else there in an irreverent and careless manner. This pierces their hearts, and deeply wounds their poor Souls. But on the contrary, when they see their flocks seriously, reverently, seasonably, and constantly keep their places, and worship God together, conscientiously and dutifully: this lightens, gladdens and comforts their hearts; strengthens their hands, and puts (as it were) a new life into them. It oyles the Wheels, and helps to make them run on easily, sweetly and comfortably. If it be the duty of Ministers to wait on their Office, to Preach the word in season, and out of season; to attend to the Ministry of the word, and to feed their flocks and watch over them; as indeed it is. Then undoubtedly, it is the indispensable duty of such to attend and wait on their Ministry. For the work is relative. And the same Authority that binds the one, binds also the other. The one must Preach and Administer, and the other must freely, dutifully, and constantly wait on their Administrations. And let me tell you and assure you, that by your deserting your Ministers in whole or in part, you despise them
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and their Ministry ; you expose your selves to inevitable Reproach (for it is a scandalous sin) and your Ministers and their Ministry to great derision and contempt, and this will cost you dear one day.

Obj. *But we cannot profit by them ; their Ministrations are dead to us.*

Ans. It may be so, but whose fault is that, theirs or yours ? will you lay the blame on them, when indeed it is your own ? is that justice, or horrible injustice ? Prov. 17. 15. *He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just : even they both are abomination to the Lord.* You did once value and esteem them, and found life and refreshing in their Ministry ? else why did you joyn with them, call and chuse them for your Ministers ? They did not force themselves on you, you were at your free choice, to refuse them, and sit down under others Ministry. Besides, while you pretend that the cause of your deserting such as you have chosen and once found good by, others of the same Congregation find their Ministry very profitable to them still, and continue to wait on it, and bless God for it ; and abhor all thoughts of deserting it : If so, then it is evident that God is with your Ministers, and blesses their Ministry ; and then what follows ? but that the fault is in you, not in your Ministry. For why should not you profit by it as well as others ? but that the obstruction is at home ? And it would better become you, and argue a better spirit in you, to search out the plagues of your own hearts, and lay the blame where it is, than where it is not. If

you find no good by their Ministry, is it not because you (1) have left God in secret ? God and you are become strangers at home ? If it be so, as most likely it is, then wonder not if the Ordinances of God profit you not. For what can you expect to find in Divine Ordinances, when God is departed from you, because you are departed from God ? There is a *woe* pronounced to such, *Hosea*. 9. 12. (2.) Do you not live in some known sin without Repentance ? It is more than probable you do : and if so, then be sure you will find no good in any of Gods Ordinances, untill that Idol be removed by Repentance, out of your hearts and hands, *Ezek.* 14. 2, 3, 7. *Joshua*. 7. says God to such, *I will answer you according to your Idols* ; who presume to come before me with Idols in your hearts, as every known sin is. (3.) Have you not conceived a displeasure, and taken up prejudice against your Ministers persons, or their Ministry. If so, no marvel if you profit not by them ? But then I say, that's your fault, not theirs : you have laid a stumbling block in your own way, and obstruct your profiting, by the works of your own hands. So some of the *Corinthians* were prejudiced against *Paul*, and they could by no means profit by his Ministry ; and therefore away they go to *Apollo*. Why, what's the matter ? why ! he had not such excellent speech and language as *Apollo* had, *1 Cor.* 2. 1. and his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible, *2 Cor.* 10. 10. Alas ! *Paul* is an inconsiderable fellow ; We did love, affect and wait, on his Ministry, and time was, we received profit by it. But

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now the case is altered; *Paul* is no man for us, no, but *Apollo*, a man of more Eloquence shall be our man now, a Rush for *Paul*. Well, to *Apollo* they go, and leave poor *Paul* to Preach to their seats, or shift for himself. But it is not long that *Apollo* shall please them and be their man, no, but to *Cephas* they go, and where then, God knows. But was this their virtue, and a proof of their spiritual growth and attainments? no, but on the contrary, the Holy Ghost tells them once and again, that they did wickedly by their shiftings from one Teacher to another, and proved themselves but poor, low, carnal professors, 1 Cor. 3. 1, 2, 3. This is ordinarily (if not alwayes) one cause of mens leaving their own Ministers. And you that are guilty of it now, will find this evil humour at the bottom of your shifting, and withdrawing from your Teachers; would you suffer your Consciences to speak out, and search them to the bottom; but that you are not willing to see your own spots in a clear Glass. (4.) Do you not profit by the Ministry of your own Ministers? why! is it not your *Pride*? do you not conceit that you are wiser than they, and so they are unmeet and unworthy to teach you, and you are too high and good to learn or be taught of them? half an eye may see that this is also in the bottom of your desertions: you are not poor and hungry hearers, nor little in your own eyes, but are too full of conceits of your own abilities, and base conceits of your Teachers; and therefore you are not profitted by their Ministry. This also was the *Corinthians Disease*, which made them slight *Paul's* Mi-

Ministry as unprofitable and unworthy of them, 1 Cor. 4. 2, 11. (5.) And as in these causes at home you will, or may find, why you do not profit by the Ministry of your own Teachers; so likewise because the world, and the deceitful pleasures and profits thereof do lye deep in your hearts, and swallow up, yea drown your minds and affections. In a word, you want love to Christ, his word, Ordinances and Ministers, and therefore you do not profit; you do not pray heartily and fervently for them, that God would make them able Ministers of the New Testament, and bless their Ministry to your Souls profit: and therefore they profit you not. *Again, you trouble, distract and grieve their hearts, contrary to the will of God: and therefore they cannot profit you.* And by these and many other sinful wayes, you *grieve the holy Spirit so*, as that he will not concur with, nor bless and prosper their sincere endeavours to do you good. But then I say still, the fault is in you, not in them; they would, but cannot mend these things in you, but so may you if you will. And know for certain, that if you are really willing to know these and other causes in your selves; and shall deal truly with your own hearts, and consciences in the case, you will find what I have said to be a great truth. And whether or no, you will know and own it, yet be sure that God (the great heart-searcher) doth know it is so. And let me advise and counsel you, in the fear of God, to hasten to find out these plagues of your own hearts, and ways, and get deep convictions of them; humble your selves
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before God unfeignedly for them: confess your Errours and sins, and take the blame and shame to your selves, *for harbouring such Vipers in your bosoms*; falsely blaming and charging your Teachers, with your own evils, justifying the guilty (your selves) and condemning the just (your Ministers) which the Lord abhors. Sue out pardons in the blood of Christ, and do all you can towards the removal of all the hindrances of your profitting by your own Ministry, out of the way, and get a meek, humble, hungering and thirsting Spirit, a heavenly and spiritual frame of heart, love to Christ, his Word and Ordinances, to your own Teachers, and their Administrations; and see if the case do not alter. Prove, if their Ministry do not profit you, and if God do not indeed bless and prosper their labours to you. If you shall in good earnest do these things, and come in obedience to hear them, as to an Ordinance of Christ for your good; look unto, and depend on him for his presence and blessing on your attendance on their Ministry: set your selves in sincerity of heart before the face of God to receive his word, and the blessed power and efficacy of it on your Souls, and give diligent attention to what you hear, and resolve unfeignedly, and endeavour with all your abilities (as you are bound to do) to practise, and rightly improve all you hear to your own and others profit, and the glory of God in all. I dare boldly assure you, that you shall find the blessing of all Ordinances Administred by them to your Souls. Therefore try and prove it so (as you ought, and may do, and your own experi-

periences will fully and clearly answer the objection, and remove all difficulties out of the way.

Obj. But we find the Ministry of others more profitable to us.

Ans. That's strange, and no less than a grosse delusion; for can you indeed believe on a Scripture foundation and evidence, that God hath commanded you to obey him to your loss & detriment? God hath charged his Churches, *to assemble themselves together*, namely, with their own Teachers, *Heb. 10. 25. and to obey them that have the Rule, or oversight over them; Heb. 13. 17. and to know them which labour among them, and are over them in the Lord, and to esteem very highly in love, for their works sake, 1 Thes. 5. 12. 13. here is your duty.* And if so, then be sure God intended all he commanded you, for your profit and advantage, and in no case to your disprofit; he that hath with your own free consent, set you in such a Church, given you such a Ministry, enclined your hearts to make choice of it, and them for your Ministry and Ministers, sealed their Ministry to others, if not to you (for the abovesaid Reasons) commanded them to feed you, and watch over you, and given them hearts to do it, from time to time; did undoubtedly know what was best for you, and design your profit, and the good of the whole. And if he had, had an intention to have made use of others, rather than of those you have to your greater advantage, he would in season have directed you to them, or else they to you; and not have settled you where you are, and have bound you

you there to abide in love and peace, and in a dependence on him for his presence and blessing; to your wrong and prejudice, as the objection intimates. This objection sets the Precepts and Orders of God, at discord and variance with his promises of his presence and blessings with his people. For if he hath enjoined you to assemble together, and keep to your own fold, under the Teaching and oversight of your own Ministers, as he hath done; and yet as you say, he blesses another Ministry in an other place, that hath no such Relation to you, as your own hath. Then I say, if that were true (as it is not) that God doth so bless that strange Ministry, only in pursuance of his promises so to do. And if so, then his promises calls you out of your place to enjoy the good of them elsewhere, when his Rules and Precepts direct and engage you, to wait on, and worship God in your own Church. But who, that are not under strong prejudices and delusion can believe it, that God should deal so with his people? or who durst affirm in cold blood, that the only wise and righteous God, is contrary to himself? or that his Laws should thus contradict his promises, or that his peoples duty and work lyes in one place, and the good of the promises in another, or that they must do their duty in one place, and yet expect the blessings of the promises in another, at the same time; yet this, and much more is implied and included in the Objection. Is not this a charging God with folly? can any men in their sober moods believe indeed, the matter of their own Objection, or the reason of their pre-

pretence, for leaving their own Ministers and Ministry, and the Congregation to which they are with, and by their own free consent united? I think not, neither dare they say in the presence and fear of God; that they do so. But in truth, it is but a pretence to blind others eyes, and stop their mouths against their just reproofs, for want of better Arguments, which such Transgressors are wholly destitute of; yet something they will, and think they must say for themselves, and the justifying of their disorderly and scandalous practises, in deserting their own chosen Teachers and Congregations; although it be never so absurd and base. But sad experience shews, what they profit by such as they pretend to be more profitable to them, than their own Teachers are. Their words and carriages are loud proofs of it: or rather, that the Devils transforming themselves into Angels of light to them, do, together with their own pride, prejudice, &c. perswade and entice them to such evil manners, and Church-destroying practices: and to put a fair face on a foul matter, he helps them to defend themselves against checks of Conscience, and Reproofs of their Brethren, by such ridiculous reasons, or rather pretences, as these.

They care not how they charge God: wrong their own Souls; stumble and offend their Brethren, grieve and sadden their own Ministers, and cast contempt on the Church and the Ministry thereof, so they may thereby, but gratifie their own lusts, their pride and prejudice; their humours and passions, and do what they please.

2. *Be tender of your Ministers good Names, and endeavour to preserve them in Credit and Reputation, to the utmost of your power, as you have opportunity.* For this is the will of Christ, and your duty. If you are charged to honour them, and highly to esteem them for their works sake? 1 Tim. 5. 17. 1 Thes. 5. 12, 13. (as aforesaid) then you are bound by the same Laws, to keep up and maintain their honour, credit and reputation among your own selves, and with others; and not hear them villified, slighted and contemned by *Backbiters*, behind their backs, while you are lookers on, and hearers of it, and hold your Tongues, and speak not for their vindication; as too many do. But rather joyn with them, and justifie such wretches by their silence, and connivence (if not positively fall in with them) then shew their indignation against them, respect to, honour of, and zeal for their Ministers and their Ministry. It is well known, that when their good Names suffer, the Ministry of Christ in their hands suffers with them, and proves a great hindrance to the Gospel: and we cannot be ignorant of Satans devices, and his industry and design to obstruct the Gospel, and the profit of Souls, by stirring up evil Tongues, to blast their Reputation, who labour in the Gospel. And the more faithful, diligent, sincere and successful they are, the more industriously will Satan, by his evil Instruments, pursue them with Reproaches; That so their labours may be rendred useles. Witness *Jeremy, Paul, yea Christ himself*, who were exceeding faithful, diligent, and useful in the World to men.

men Yet how were they bespattered with evil Tongues? and rendred unworthy Inhabitants of the World. And the same Spirit is still working, and like Instruments ready to do the same work against your Ministers now. Therefore you must do as *Pefer* did, *Acts* 2. 12, 13. when he heard the mouths of men open against them, namely, stand up stoutly for their vindication, and sharply reprove their *Back-biters*, and wicked slanderers, and by no means give them any encouragement by your harkning to, or silence at them. Christ vindicated *Joshua* against the Devils accusation and Reproaches, *Zach.* 3. 1, 2, 3, 4. so do you your Ministers. But especially, do not you, who are Church-Members, receive or entertáin an accusation against your Teachers at all, behind their backs, *nor under two or three credible witnesses*, before their faces; nor be *Whisperers* against, or *Back-biters* of them your selves, one to another. For that is such horrible wickedness, as God, and their Lord and Master will most certainly revenge, and arise in due time to plead their cause against you, although he may seem to wink at it for a time. And know, that if your Ministers know not your doings, yet God takes special notice of them, and will declare his abhorrence of them to your shame and sorrow at last. Blessed *Ezekiel*, had his *Whisperers* and *Back-biters* by the Walls, unknown to him, but God detected them, *Ezek.* 33. 30, 31, 32, 33. (read the words at large) They were a Generation that carried it smoothly and fairly to his face, but cruelly snarled at him behind his back, and set their venomous Teeth in his flesh;

flesh, as too many Professors do now deal with their Teachers. Many Church-members do greatly please themselves now, with talking to one another against their Teachers, behind their backs, and blame them for this and that, and so wipe their mouths and say they have done no evil. They can with delight hear them villified; receive and entertain false accusations against them, from their bitter Enemies; yea, and report what they have heard to others also; and bless themselves in their so doing. But let such know, that they have done very abominably and unrighteously, and their sin will assuredly find them out in Gods time. The Lord Jesus charges you, that you *receive not an accusation against an Elder, under two or three witnesses*, 1 Tim. 5. 19. and yet they dare do it upon the back-biting accusation of one malicious Accuser. God charges you to honour your Ministers, and to uphold and maintain their Credit and Reputation in the Church and World, for his name and Gospels sake, and the good of Souls. But you dare stand by, and by your silence countenance their back-biting Reproachers, while you hear them discredit and dishonour them, and that which is yet worser, you give your positive consent to their wickedness, and joyn Issues with them by receiving, crediting and entertaining of what they say. God peremptorily charges you not to *Whisper against back-biters, nor speak evil of any man, nor be a Tale-bearer*, Levit. 19. 16. Tit. 3. 2. Jam. 4. 11. Eph. 4. 31. 2 Cor. 12. 20. and particularly of Teaching-Rulers, Exod. 22. 28. Act. 23. 5. But you dare to do

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it (as it were) in spight of God and your own Consciences, of, and against your Elders. Oh! let your Ministers good Names, be of great esteem with you, and near and dear unto you. Be you very cheary and tender of them, and do not in any way, by any means, either by Omission or Commission, dishonour or discredit them. For by your so doing, you disobey the will of God, and dishonour him, and declare that you hate your Ministers, although you pretend to love & honour them; that you contemn them, although you pretend the contrary never so much. Yea, you are guilty of real Murder, as I have abundantly proved from Scripture; in a book, entituled, *The evil Tongue tryed and found guilty, &c.*

3. *Visit your Ministers often, and be not strange, or strangers to them; for that will much discourage them in their work.* There is a near Relation between Pastors and their Churches, which calls for frequent visits; and your frequent visits, if free and voluntary, and the fruits of your love to them, and esteem of them, especially if well improved, will be very refreshing, comforting and encouraging to them. If they are freely willing to give you loving and profitable visits; then so should you to them; your Elders love your Company, and glad to see you free and open hearted in your converses with them, about your concerns, when seriously and meekly managed; and the contrary is very grievous and offensive to their Souls. For how can they think you love and esteem them, when you will not vouchsafe (it may be) to give them a visit, in

a whole year together? or how can they believe you profit by, and value their labours, when you are so exceeding shy of their Company, and strange in your carriages towards them; your voluntary visits might be improved to great profit to both: and I am perswaded, that the neglect of this is sinful, and not a little detrimental, or injurious to their Souls. As their work will not permit it, so 'tis unreasonable, that your Teachers should alwayes go to you, if they will speak with you. Therefore you should come to them, as well as they go to you. Well then! encourage them, by your so doing, and you will reap the profit of it, as well as they. Let your love to them and esteem of them, be seen in this, as well as in other expressions of them. For it is your duty so to do, as it is your duty to forbear whatever may discourage them, and do all you can to encourage and forward them in their work. But be sure, that your visits be not in vain, but to spiritual profit; And that they are indeed, the fruits of your cordial love to, and esteem of them, or else they are no better than painted Images, and whited Sepulchres; and you will appear to be no better than *Ezekiels* hearers were to him; *who with their mouths did shew much love, but their hearts were of another mould*, Ezek. 33. 30. ult.

4. Stand by them, and help to bear their burdens, when you know them, and they require your assistance. Bear ye one anothers burdens, and so fulfil the Law of Christ, Gal. 6. 2. If you know them fall into, or under any Sin or Temptation, set your hand to lift them up again; If

they fall under afflictions, help to bear them for them. Be like the good *Samaritan* in this matter, *Luk.* 10. and not like the *cruel Priest* and *Levite*, who saw the wounded man lay weltring in his blood, and crying out of his wounds, and left him to shift for himself, 31. 32. verses, no, but shew your selves good *Samaritans*, who sympathized with, and actually helped him in his distress, according to his need. If your Ministers must sympathize with you, and help you in your needs, then you must do the same to them. Shew bowels of love and pity to them, and set your hands and shoulders too, to help them under their Sins, Temptations, and other Tryals and Afflictions; and if possible to lift them out of them. Are they reproached? help to bear their burdens. Are they persecuted by men? help to bear their burdens. And do the like in all other weighty cases for them. Oh! how many are there, who pretend highly for Heaven? but care not what becomes of their painful Ministers. Who can hear of their troubles and sorrowes, and *Galiolike*, care for none of these things, nor seriously mind, whether they sink or swim; but like *Pauls* pretended friends, who when they saw him in deadly danger, forsook him, 2 Tim. 4. 16. and left him to stand or fall by himself.

5. Blame not their Ministry to one another, especially behind their backs, neither slight and undervalue their gifts, graces, or any of their endeavours and labours, in and for the Church; although they may not in all things suit or please your humours, thoughts or opinions. For they are

are bound in their Administrations, to please Christ, and follow their own light and judgments, their perswasions and consciences in all things, for the Churches edification; and not to walk according to the judgments, will and pleasure of their Church-Members, either in their Doctrine or Discipline. And those Churches that will impose their own apprehensions and opinions on their Pastors or Elders, and load them with burdens of work and duty, which the Lord Jesus never commanded them, are in their so doing, no less than Tyrannical-Usurpers over them. For if Elders may not impose any thing or matter on the Churches, *but the yoke and will of Christ*, much less may the Churches impose their own opinions on their Elders. We say, that it is too hard a matter for any man to please all men, and experience shews, that it is as hard a matter for any Elders of Churches to please all their Members; but that one or other will be offended at this, another at that; and then divulge their dislike of this or that in them unto others, and endeavour to bring them into dislike of it also: And then to make it their business to tattle and talk of it one to another, until they have run themselves into further mischiefs. Therefore Ministers, may no further seek to please their Churches, then in and by their so doing, they may please Christ their Lord. And what that is, I should think, that their Elders should understand as well, if not better than they. Paul *sought not to please men, but God in his Ministry*, Gal. 1. 10. Some Professors do delight themselves in this evil

work, namely, in seeking matters, and making faults against their Elders, and then possess others with their own inventions; and if they do not gratifie and, please them in all things, they shall (be sure) to please them in nothing. All their works are blame-worthy, in their account. But as this shews that they are acted by a Spirit of Pride and prejudice against their Elders, so they do thereby declare their own folly, and lay open their own nakedness, with a witness: yea, they dishonour Christ, hinder the profit of their own and others Souls, by their so contemning his and their Ministry; and greatly grieve and stumble their Teachers, and cause them to walk up and down with sad hearts. Therefore do you take heed and beware of this evil, for the Devil will tempt you to it, that he may hurt your Souls, afflict your Teachers, and hinder the Gospel; you should commend and esteem whatever is their vertue, whatever you may see lovely in them; and if you see any defects, or unavoidable weaknesses in them, to cast a mantle of love over them; and by all means endeavour to keep up in each others hearts, a due esteem of, and respect unto them, and their Ministry, that the Gospel be not hindred, but furthred and encouraged by your means.

6. *Joyn with your Teachers, and that by affording them your Concurrence and utmost assistance, in their endeavours to promote good things in, for the good of the Church; and do not hinder, or load such overtures, designs and endeavours of your Ministers, by your absence, groundless disputes, or by your sullen silence there. When they*

they propound any matter to you for your profit, and the welfare of your Souls, the peace and prosperity of the Church, or the benefit of others: then weigh and ponder well the reasons which they give, for what they do, or desire should be done, or omitted, by themselves or the Church, or altogether; and if you cannot null and answer them, or bring better for the contrary; then you should quietly, thankfully, and peaceably accept of theirs, acquiesce in them, and encourage them in their design, and not put difficulties in the way, by some singular notions of your own. Do as *Nathan* did, when *David* propounded a case to him, and told him, that it was meet God should have a house built for his Name and Worship, and gives him some reason for his proposition. *Nathan* replies, Go, do all that is in thy heart, 2 Sam. 7. He saw it a most reasonable and useful an undertaking; and freely complied with *David*, and encouraged him to go on and proceed. Why should not you comply with your Teachers? when they design and propound some good work, to be carried on, for the glory of Christ, and benefit of his Church, or other men? and why should not their reasons be soberly and humbly considered of by you, and oblige you to practise, unless you can null them, and with peace and meekness propound better to them for their satisfaction. It is sad when Members of Churches shall be so highly conceited of themselves, and their own Notions, as that they shall despise and turn (as it were) a deaf ear to all the reasons of their Elders, and delight in being singular from them

and their fellow-Brethren, in Church-matters : and in contending for Victory, rather than for Truth. This ought not to be. For it makes Church-work tedious, spoys the beauty and loveliness of it ; yea it marrs the Harmony of Church order. And this is dishonourable to Christ, and the Church ; and exceedingly grievous to your Teachers : who do unfeignedly seek and aim at your good in all ; and dare not do otherwise for fear of offending Christ their Lord.

7. *Encourage them with your Purfes also. For it is the will of Christ that you should do so. They labour for your Souls, and spend their time and strength to do you all possible service, in their plaues and capacities ; and therefore it is most reasonable that you should labour and provide for their bodies. They spend for you, and therefore you should spend for them. They are Shepherds ; do watch over and wait on you, their Flocks. And I appeal to any indifferent Judgment, if it be not a most reasonable thing, that they should live by the milk of their Flocks : surely ! Paul, yea the Holy Ghost thought so, 1 Cor. 9. 7, 8. and therefore have declared it, for our Learning and practise. It was Gods Ordinance under the old Testament, and it is ratified and confirmed to men, under and by the new Testament also ; namely, that Ministers should be honourably and comfortably maintained, by their Congregations. The Great God took special care about it, and made provisions for their maintenance, as soon as he had ordained and set them up, and appointed and set them out their work. And*
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God strictly charged his people, to see that they did not at any time *forget or neglect the Levite*, but pay them all that he had set out and appointed for them; and that then, when by reason of Age, or other impediments, they could not Minister to them, and for them, as well as when they did, *Numb. 3. 6. to the 14. vers. Numb. 16. 9, 10. Deut. 26. 2. 15. vers. Deut. 10. 8, 9. Numb. 7. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Deut. 12. 19. Deut. 14. 26, 27, 28, 29. Deut. 18. 1, 9.* Now Gods care of, and goodness to his *Embassadours*, did not dye with the *Ceremonial Law*, but he hath continued it under the Gospel, and therein straitly charged his people to provide for them, according to their abilities. God commands his people to communicate to their Teachers in all good things, *Gal. 6. 6. Let him that is taught in the word, communicate to him that Teacheth, in all good things.* And in *1 Cor. 9. 14.* The Apostle assures us, that it is not of men, but a *real and unchangeable Ordinance of God*, now, by, and under the Gospel. For (says he) *so hath God ordained, that they that Preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel.* (Mark), it is ordained; God hath made it a Statute-Law, that cannot be altered, neither may it be transgressed under pain of Gods high displeasure. And the Apostle argues (by the Spirit) the justness, and the undoubted reasonableness and righteousness of mens so doing, and that the evidence of meer Reason, and the Dictates of natural Conscience, without either written Law or Gospel, will abundantly prove, and undeniably conclude this Truth, against all opposition whatsoever, *7. 10. verses.*
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And proves, that it is not matter of gift or charity, (as it is to give to men in distress, to whom we are not endebted nor related) but that it is debt and justice; or a due debt in strict Justice: and that by a threefold Law, (viz.) *The Law of Nature, the written Law of God, in the old Testament; and the new Law or Gospel,* as in this, 1 Cor. 9. from the 5. to the 15. vers. he evinces, so in Gal. 6. 6. and Rom. 15. 27. And says the Apostle in 1 Cor. 9. 11. v. *If we have sown to you spiritual things, is it a great thing, if we shall reap your carnal things.* As if he had said, alafs! These are but light, small and low matters that you give us, for our pains and labours, in comparison of what we do for and dispense to you. Your carnal things, that you impart to us for our bodies, are not comparable to our labour, pains and care to impart spiritual Riches to your Souls. And therefore if you grudge at your parting with yours to us, know, that you grudge us small and very inconsiderable things, in comparison of what we distribute to you. This is another of your works and duties to your Teachers. You must therefore do it, and that 1. Chearfully and willingly, not grudgingly; heartily, not hypocritically and indifferently; dutifully, and in obedience to the will of Christ, not as an arbitrary thing, that you may, or may not do, at your own will and pleasure; Constantly and perseveringly, not for some time onely. And see that your ends be right in it, namely, to encourage your Ministers, propagate the Gospel; to profit Souls; to serve, please and honour the Lord Jesus; and that in the

the right performance of your duty to Christ & his Ministers, you may enjoy the good of the promises, and the blessings of all Christs Ordinances administered by them.

But that I may a little more inforce this on your Consciences, be pleased to consider, First, *That your Ministers are appointed, commanded, and they do wholly attend on Christ, and the service of your Souls.* They are said to wait at the Altar, 1 Cor. 9. 13. and commanded to give themselves wholly to their work of Teaching, Ruling, Reading, Meditation, Study, and Exhortation, that their profiting may appear to all: that they may rightly divide the word of Truth, and that by so doing, they may both save themselves, and them that hear them, 1 Tim. 4. 13, 14, 15, 16. 2 Tim. 2. 15. They must Preach the word in season, and out of season, &c. 2 Tim. 1. 2. Feed their Flocks, and take the care and oversight of them, Act. 20. 28. 1 Pet. 5. 1, 2. And therefore you must take care of their bodies, on whom they attend. For you see that they may not, cannot follow other Employments to get Bread, because they are commanded to do other work for you, & the greatness & difficulty of their own proper work, necessitates them to wait on, and attend to it with all diligence. Therefore you ought to provide for them, all suitable supplies, because they cannot, may not do it themselves. (2.) Consider, *that you are plainly and peremptorily commanded, and charged to Communicate to them, in, and of all your carnal things, as you heard before.* And therefore you are by Christs Authority, and revealed will, indispenibly bound to do it, and that

that without grudging or gain-saying. For a plainer, and a more Indispensible duty is not imposed upon you (who are able) in the Gospel: and therefore you cannot plead ignorance, for the breach or neglect of it. And if you do not obey your God and King in this, as well as in other things; how can you be called, *obedient Children*, 1 Pet. 1. 14. and how shall Christ commend you, as he did *Zachary and Elizabeth*, for walking in all his *Commandments and Ordinances*, blamelessly? Luk. 1. 6. Or how can you expect that Christ should say unto you, *well done good and faithful servants*? You have done that which was your duty to do: when you know, that you lived in the wilful neglect of a known and easie duty? (3.) Consider, that God takes special notice of your doings and carriages towards his *Embassadors*, and your *Teachers*. He is privy to all your wayes; and will abundantly reward all your kindnesses and unkindnesses to them, and that because they are his and yours. Therefore, be careful to demean and carry your selves towards them so, as that the Lord Jesus may say to you, *well done good and faithful Servants, you have been kind and good, respectful and dutiful to my Ministers, and to me in them*. And therefore I will recompence all your work of faith and labour of love to them. For what you did to them, as they were my Ministers, you did to me; I take all, as done to my self, enter into the joy of your Lord. These are some, and but some of the Churches duties towards their Pastors, or Teaching-Elders. For although I have been larger on this head than I

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intended, yet I forbear speaking any more, lest some should think, I say too much.

CHAP. VI.

Of meer Ruling-Elders, and Deacons of their Office, Work and Power in the Church. How they ought to do their Work, and for what ends they are set in the Church. As also the Churches duty to them; with the necessary qualifications of such Officers.

Quest. **W**hat other Officers hath Christ appointed for, and set in his Church or Churches, in the New Testament, besides Teaching-Elders.

Ans. The Lord Jesus hath set in his New Testament-Churches, *Ruling-Elders and Deacons*. Ruling-Elders, or Elders, whose chief, if not only work is to rule in the Church, and to help to Mannage the Discipline thereof, with the Teaching-Elders; seems to be warranted in the Gospel. The *Texts* that speak most clearly in the case, are in the 1 Tim. 5. 17. Rom. 12. 8. 1 Cor. 12. 28. In Timothy, they seem to be expressly distinguished from Teaching Ruling-Elders: *Let the Elders that Rule well, be counted worthy of double honour; especially, they who labour in the Word and Doctrine.* This especially, refers to such Ruling-Elders, whose work and main business is to Teach, and who are especially therefore, worthy of double honour, for that they have a double work and Office,

Office, namely, Teaching and Ruling. But the first part of the words speaks of meer Ruling-Elders, who in the faithful, diligent, and conscientious discharge of their Office and Trust in the Church, are counted worthy of double honour, and ought to be honoured and respected as such, by the Church; not as they are Elders, but Elders who mind their business, and perform their work well and faithfully, as becomes Stewards of the house of God. In the *Romanes*, the words are these: *He that Ruleth with diligence.* In the 6. and 7. verses, we have the Apostle speaking to another sort of Officers, namely, Teachers; whose greatest work is to Prophecie, Minister and Teach. And therefore (says he) let such wait on that part of their work. Then he comes to another sort of Officers, and these sayes he, are to *Rule with diligence*: Not to attend to Teaching, as the others were to do, but to Ruling, and that with diligence; whereby he distinguisheth the one from the other, and shews that they are distinct persons and Officers from the Teachers, before mentioned. In like manner, the Apostle seems to me, to point out this sort of Office and Officers, in the 1 Cor. 12. 28. God (saith he) hath set some in the Church, first Apostles, Secondly Prophets, Thirdly Teachers, then Helps, Governments. Now what should these helps, Governments be, as here and elsewhere distinguished from teaching Ruling-Elders, but this sort of Ruling-Elders, I am speaking of? For as every Church of Christ needs Teaching, so also Government and Discipline for their order and well being. But be-

because the Teaching Elders cannot attend continually to their Ruling work (because their Teaching and Minist'ring other Ordinances diverts them from it) so often as need requires; therefore hath God set in his Churches meer Ruling Elders, that they, (as *Moses* his 70. Elders) may help to bear the burden, and assist the Teaching-Elders in the Discipline and Government of the Church. And therefore they are in the *Corinths*, joyned to the Teaching Ruling- Elders, (and also in the *Romanes*) and they are expressly called *Helps, Governments*, for that they are given of God, to help their Teachers or Pastors in the Government of the Church. And truly it hath its weight with me, namely, the necessity of such Officers in the Churches, to help their Pastors in the Government thereof. For as Satan is more busie and vigilant in the Churches, to cause disorders therein, than in any other Societies of men; So there is the more need of diligent and careful Government and Inspection, to keep all in order. And as was said before, the Teaching-Elders cannot so constantly attend to the work of Discipline, because of their other work, as need requires; therefore there is a kind of necessity of meer Ruling-Elders, to help and assist them, in the well Ordering and Governing the Church. Thus we see, that there are such Officers, and such an Office in the word of God.

Quest. For what ends hath God set Ruling-Elders in his Church, and what is their Office, Work, and Power there?

Answ. Although the Scripture seems to speak

Speak but little of this matter, namely, of their work, use and ends for which they are set in the Church, particularly; yet if it be clear, that such an Office, and Officer distinct from the Teachers, are given to, and set in the Church, by the Lords appointment; and that they are Authorized and Empowred by Christ, to Act and Officiate there, in his Name, then (I say) it is certain, they have their special work to do there; for they are not set there to have a Name, and signifie nothing else, but they have their work there, as such, which they are diligently to attend unto, for the benefit of the Church, and the glory of Christ their Lord. Now what their work and business is, I shall search out, and discover, as well as I can, and that with all possible brevity.

First then, they are expressly called Ruling-Elders, or Elders that Rule, in the Scripture. *1 Tim. 5. 17.* Now what doth their Name and Office signifie and imply, but that they are to assist their Teachers in the orderly Government of the Church, (as was said before). And I think their work lies chiefly in these Ten things.

1. *In looking after the Conversations of such, as propound themselves to joyn with the Church, that the Church admit not any scandalous persons amongst them* That if they are such, they may be debarr'd and kept out; if otherwise (together with other qualifications) they may be received in. This I judge to be one part of their work. For certainly, it is one part and end of Church-power, to keep the Church clear from scandal and offence. And they may

may and ought to do it Authoritatively, and not as private Members may do it, only.

2. In the absence, or upon the desire of the Pastor, they may admit or take Members into the Church, or rather take them into Church-Membership, by giving them the right hand of fellowship, and shewing them their duty and privilege in a Church-State. And herein they represent the Church, and act Authoritatively therein for them. This is another part of their Office, VVork and Power. And it requires good abilities, to do it well, and to purpose.

3. They may when need requires, command speech and silence in Church-meetings, for the preventing of Disorders and disorderly Members, in their words and carriages, and they may authoritatively and publickly admonish and reprove such in the face of the Church, which private Brethren may not do.

4. They may in some cases, with the consent of their Pastor or Teacher, (if at home) call and assemble the Church together, for the preventing of some apparant evil, or promoting of some good thing or work in the Church. Or in case the Pastor shall knowingly neglect to do his duty in the case, or cases aforesaid, doubtless, the Ruling-Elders may and ought to do it; and the Church ought to obey their call. For they do it by the Authority they have from Christ, for the good and benefit of the Church. But this may not be done by any Member, that is not an Elder, but in the want of an Elder. And when they are assembled together, they may authoritatively propound

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the causes and ends for which they called them there, and require their assistance.

5. *Their work is to inspect, and carefully, diligently, wisely and faithfully to look after the walkings and conversations of all the Members of the Church.* This is the chief part of their work. They are not only to take cognizance of what is brought to them, by others Reports, but to enquire after them. They are bound by virtue of their Place and Office, to see if the Members keep close to Church meetings, and reverently attend them, and if they do not, to Reprove, Admonish & Exhort them, to Teach and Instruct them. That they may know their duty ; be convinced of their sinful neglects, repent of and amend them, and that by their good Counsels and Exhortations, they may be provoked and encouraged to, and in their work. Ruling Elders, should *in this matter*, as also in comforting the afflicted, and speaking words in season to him that is weary, be able, and also (*διδασκόμενοι*) apt to Teach, 1 Tim. 3. 2. as well as the Pastors. The one more privately and particularly, and the other more publickly. For as the Deacons work is to look after the wants and corporal concerns of the Church, and provide for the poor, and the Teachers to mind and look after the concerns of their Souls, and make provisions for them according to their needs ; So Ruling-Elders have their work, namely, to look after the manners of all the Members of the Church. To encourage and strengthen the hands of the Tractable and Obedient, and to

to reprove, convince, and perswade the Disobedient; that they may do what they ought.

6. *And therefore, they should often visit them, and see how they do, and how they walk; what they want, and wherein they need their assistance, and helping hand; and when they know it, to hold it out unto them, freely and readily.* Certainly Elders should be intimately acquainted with their Congregations, and with their walkings also. For if any miscarry through their default or neglect, the guilt will lie at their Doors, and the Lord Jesus will require it at their hands. Oh! that Elders would seriously consider it, and lay this matter near their hearts, and suffer it to penetrate and pierce their Consciences; and that they would consider in good earnest, wherefore they are set in the Church, and for what ends they have Rule and Discipline put into their hands: That under deep Convictions, they may be induced to discharge their work, and perform their Trusts, mind their Duty, and prosecute the ends of their appointment; that God may be well pleased with, and bless them, own and delight to use them, for his glory in the Church; and that they receiving benefit by their wisdom, diligence and faithfulness, may rejoyce in, and bless God for them.

7. *They must take up Controversies, and endeavour to end strifes and debates in the Church, when such evils happen; which are found too frequent, through the Pride and prejudice of our hearts, and the Temptations of the Devil; who is a great Adversary to the Peace, Beauty, Order and Prosperity of Churches.* Ruling-

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Elders must not suffer any quarrels, or contentions, either in publick or private, either between a few or many, but presently interpose their VVisdom and Authority to decide and reconcile the causes and persons, and set all in joynt again. For such evils if let alone, will prove like Cancers in the body, and encrease to more ungodliness, as the Apostle speaks. Therefore the Elders should enquire into them, and search out such as did the wrong, began the strife, and such as they find are adicted to take up prejudices against, and foment debates with their Brethren; and correct the offenders, and releive the wronged and oppressed, as they see cause. There must be no *Hammer, no knocking heard in the Temple of God.* And *was* to them who give occasion for strife and debate, and to such as do improve occasions in such a manner, also; so likewise, *to negligent and careless Elders*, who do, or may know these evils, and yet let them alone, or seek to heal them in a slight manner, as if they had nothing to do with them, or were not indeed much concerned in them. But surely, this is one of your great works, as you have the power of Rule and Government in your hands, for the good of the Church. And you may authoritatively take up Controversies, and require the Members of the Church to hearken to you. And you may do Christ and the Church great service, in this matter. Therefore mind it in good earnest.

8. *Their work is to assist and encourage the Teaching-Elders, and to promote and set forward the Gospel in their hands.* They must stand by, and

and stand up for their Teachers, and not suffer them to be wronged, obstructed, or discouraged by any, so far as they can prevent it, by their power and wisdom. Do any back-bite them? Rprove them. Do any slight or contemn their Ministry? Reprove them, & shew them the evil of it, & whence it is. And they should assist and help them with their company, Advice and Counsel, when desired, and need requires it. Moreover, they ought to do all they can to make the Ministry of their Teachers acceptable unto the Church, and to see that all do their Duties to them. That they defraud not their Teachers of convenient and due maintenance, nor carry themselves rudely and disrespectfully unto them, or towards their Ministry: and that they warn and exhort them to do their Duty to them, as Christ hath commanded. That they constantly, seasonably and reverently attend to, and wait on their Ministry, and to make holy earnings and improvements of it.

9. They ought to project and prepare good orders and matters for the profit of the Church, to help forward and promote any good things presented to them by their Teachers, and help to carry them on, unto perfection. But in an especial manner they should concur with them, in promoting *Holiness* and the power of *godliness* in the Church: and that by Counsel, Instruction and Exhortation. For that is the Churches Ornament, Beauty and Glory, Psal. 93. ult. They should labour to promote, Gospel-light, life, zeal, humility, meekness and good works. They should la-

hour to promote Godliness in the Churches Families, in their hearts, and. conversations amongst men, and in their Meetings and Assemblies, to the utmost of their power, and not leave all to their Pastors to do. They are indeed indispenfibly bound to promote it all they can, by their Preaching and walking; and that publickly and privately; and Ruling-Elders are to do it privately, and particularly. And because the frequent Meetings of Christians for Prayer and Discourse, is a Duty exceeding profitable and beneficial unto their Souls, when rightly improved, wisely and spiritually managed; the Elders should encourage it, set it forward, and endeavour to maintain and uphold fuch good VVorks and Duties amongst all the Members of the Church. For fuch Meetings, will greatly promote Godliness. and keep a Savour of Chrift on the heart. Now who should promote and further this good work, fo much as the Elders; who may and ought authoritatively to do it? This is another of their works and businesfes in the Church. Therefore fee you do it in good earnest, who are Elders.

10. Laftly: Ruling-Elders (as well as Teaching) have another great work to do in and for the Church: and that is to be fingularly exemplary in their words, deeds and carriages. *Be thou an example* (fayes the Apostle to Timothy; 1 Epistle, 4. 12.) *to the Believers, in Word, in Conversation, in Charity, in Spirit, in Faith, in Purity:* for without thefe things all the reft is worth nothing at all. Elders and their VVives and Children (as well as the Deacons)

Deacons) should be examples and encourage-
 ing *Patterns of Meekness and humility* to others,
 in their Garbs or cloathings. Elders should
 be singular in wisdom, zeal, seriousness and
 gravity ; in love, sweetness, diligence, faith-
 fulness, spirituality, Heavenly mindedness,
 and in all good works. *Shew thy self* (sayes
Paul) *a Pattern of good works in all things,*
 Tit. 2. 7. They must so walk, as that others
 may safely follow their steps, and be excited
 and encouraged so to do, by their examples.
 They are indispensibly bound to be good ex-
 amples out of, and in the Congregation or
 Church, when assembled together to worship
 God. Then should the Elders shew good ex-
 amples to the whole Church, by their timely
 coming there, and by their holy, serious and
 reverent carriages and deportments in the
 worship of God. For when they neglect their
 place and duty there, or come unseasonably,
 carry themselves carelessly and unreverently ;
 they tempt others to do so too. For as they
 are Elders over the Church, and have a Name
 among them ; so they eye them much, and ex-
 pect great things of and from them. There-
 fore, Elders must take heed to their wayes, and
 see that they *walk circumspectly,* (or exactly)
Eph. 5. 15. For if they do not, believe it,
 they will do more hurt than good in the
 Church.

Thus we see, that Ruling Elders have work
 enough to do in the Church, and that there
 is need and use enough of them. And surely ,
 they might be of great use in the Church, and
 prove a great blessing indeed to her, would they

but know, mind, attend to and do their own proper work and business, and really concern themselves with Christ's, and the Churches concernments, with all their hearts and souls, as they ought to do. And oh ! that such as are called to that Office and Dignity, would seriously consider and lay to heart their wayes and doings, wherefore they are set in the Church, and invested with Power and Authority, and whether they do indeed intend, and in good earnest set to their work, and unfeignedly design and prosecute those ends ?

Quest. How should Ruling-Elders perform their work in the Church ?

Answ. First, with wisdom, or wisely. They should wisely observe the matters they have, to concern themselves about, and to manage in the Church. 2. The *times and seasons* for the doing of them ; to whom, and when. 3. The *manner* how they should or ought to do them. Much light, knowledge, and spiritual wisdom is required in Church Government, and Governours. And therefore, they have great need to pray, read and study much, for Divine wisdom, and Spiritual understanding in these things. That they may discern the will of Christ their Lord and Law-giver, and not mistake their way and work ; nor the times, seasons and occasions thereof, nor stumble at any stumbling-stone, or walk in the dark, in so great and importunate matters.

2. *The revealed will of Christ in his New Testament*, is to be their great and only *Rule and Guide* in Church-matters. No other voice must be heard there, but his ; nor any other

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Authority, Law, or Rule to be observed, followed, and obeyed; but his. It is *given to him, to be the Head over all things to his Church*, Eph. 1. 22, 23. And therefore, they ought to *observe all things, whatsoever he hath commanded them*, (and nothing else) Math. 28. 20. in the exercise of their Authority, in or for the Church. This they must carefully and continually mind, and have in their eye, that they do not their own wills, and walk by their own Rules, but Christs. For in so doing he will bless and prosper them, help and assist them: and in the end he will reward all their conformity and obedience to his holy will. But otherwise he will say, who required these things of you. Therefore, when any cases or works are offered to you; you must consider them, and the Laws or Rules by which you ought to proceed, in what you are called to do: and then proceed and manage your work accordingly. Be you sure to steer your course aright by Divine light and Laws; look up to, and own Christ and his Authority in all your proceedings. For you act not as *civil Magistrates* in a state, but as the *Spiritual Magistrates* of Christ in his Church. And therefore (I say) it is his Will and Authority only, that you must observe and walk by.

3: *Diligently*: you must exercise your power with all possible diligence, Rom. 12. 8. *He that Ruleth with diligence*. That is, he must frequently attend to his Ruling-work, and what he doth therein, he must do with all his abilities. He must be earnest and fervent in it, and set himself to it, as to his work and busi-

business. He must not be slothful, negligent, or careless in it, as if it were an indifferent thing; no, but he ought to be *diligent, and fervent in Spirit, serving the Lord*, in what he doth, Rom. 12. 11. *The negligent servant shall be beaten with many stripes*, Luk. 12. 47. They should be *diligent to know the state of their Flocks*, Prov. 27. 23. For although, they (I mean the Church) are not the Ruling Elders Flock, as they are the Teaching Ruling-Elders, yet they are in a sense, their Flock and charge, to watch over them, and inspect their manners and walkings.

4. *Readily; willingly, and chearfully.* They should be like the Teaching-Elders in this also, 1 Pet. 5. 2. *Taking the oversight of the Flock, not by constraint, but willingly; not as Lords over Gods Heritage, but examples to the Flock.* It is sad indeed, when they look not after them, nor mind their work and Office in the Church, but when they are constrained, and as it were forced to it, by their Teachers, and cannot for shame but do something then, but somewhat unwillingly, coldly and indifferently; as if it were a small thing, or a matter by the by: and which they would not trouble themselves about, could they handsomely evade and pass it by. They grudge at it, and account it their burden, not their delight. But surely, it should be their delight to serve Christ and his Church; and they should most readily, willingly and chearfully do it.

5. *Conscientiously and Dutifully.* The will of Christ and their duty: their work and opportunity to do good, should lye deep in their hearts,

hearts, and powerful on their Consciences; and what they do in the Church, in pursuance of their Trust and Office-power, for the Lord Jesus and his Church; they are bound to do it upon Choice, conscientiously and dutifully: and that, because it is their place, work and duty, by virtue of Christ's Authority; who hath for these ends set them in the Church; appointed and enjoined them such work and service there: for his glory and their good. They must not only bear Rule, but they must *Rule well too*, for those ends; or else they are of no use and service there. Now how can they be said to Rule well, as commanded; unless they use and exercise their Office-power so; namely, wisely, diligently, readily and willingly; chearfully, conscientiously and dutifully, according to the Laws and Rules of Christ their Lord?

6. They ought to exercise their Authority, and use their power in the Church, with much *love, tenderness, meekness, impartiality*; and sometimes (as need requires) *with severity* too. They must not exalt themselves, and carry it in a Lordly manner towards their Brethren, because they have Authority over, and may command them. But they must see that they temper their power, and the exercise and use of it with love, tenderness, humility and meekness. They should so carry themselves in all things, as that on the one hand they be not slighted and despised, and on the other hand, envied for their haughtiness. They should so behave themselves in the house of God, as that they may give occasion to all, to think

think that they love them, and respect their good, in all they do. So likewise they ought to be just and impartial in their proceedings towards all, and not respect persons in Judgment, but the merit of the cause. And in case of necessity, when they have to do with stubborn and obstinate persons; they may and ought to be severe, in dealing with them, when they cannot otherwise prevail on them, to convince, humble and reform them, Jude 22. 23.

7. And in all their endeavours, ways and practises in the Church, they should *intend, design and aim at the union, peace, holiness, comfort and prosperity of the Church*; the honour of Religion, encouragement of the Gospel and the Glory of Christ. All which blessed ends they should wisely, zealously, sincerely, seriously, industriously and faithfully prosecute, and with all their might strive and labour to obtain; and by all means, and that with much patience and perseverance, in the use of them, hope and pray, seek and wait to accomplish; in the Lords time. They must not make one or two attempts to reconcile differences, rectify disorders, dissuade from Sin, perswade to Duty; to heal wounds and encourage to Repentance, and so leave it, without looking after the Issue and the success of their labours, but they must follow on their work until the ends be obtained. They, (as well as their teaching Elders) must *look well to their herds, Prov. 27. 23.* They must see, that *they rule well, and with diligence; 1 Tim. 5. 17. Rom. 12. 8.* and that they approve themselves faithfull Stewards to Christ

Christ and his Church, in all their proceedings; and make full proof thereof.

Quest, *What are the qualifications of ruling Elders, or how should they be qualified, for so high and honourable work and office in the Church.*

Ans. I shall briefly name some of their necessary qualifications; and but some of them, and such as are indeed necessary for them; without which, they cannot, will not rule well, nor be profitable to the Church. First, They must be qualified with *Spiritual Gifts and special Graces: with a considerable measure of divine Wisdome and Spiritual understanding.* They should be, not only real Saints, but eminent Saints too. They must not only have peculiar Grace, but be strong in Grace also. Surely! they ought to be well furnished with the Gifts and Graces of the Spirit, that they may go in and out; and walk in the Church as shining Lights; be able to judge and discern cases and persons, and make a sound and true Judgment of the things and matters they may be called to judge and determine. They must not be *Novices* in the knowledge of Christ, his Law & Gospel (the Rules by which they must walk); but they must have the *Word of Christ, to dwell in them richly, in all Wisdom; Col. 3. 16.* to help them in their work. They cannot rule well, unlesse they do understand and can speak well; nor unlesse they are well acquainted with their Office, Work, and the Rules thereof. They ought to be sober, grave and serious Persons, and not of vain, light and frothy behaviour, in their spirits & carriages. They should be of prompt ready minds and spirits for their work,

work, and not of dull, lumpish and heavy Tempers. For if they are such, they will not act upon choice freely, but by constraint, and that will render them unprofitable and undefireable to the Church. They should be men of blamelesse lives, and spotlesse conversations; and they should be men of warm and lively affections, abounding in Love, zeal and fervour of Spirit. They ought to be *men of Courage, fearing God*, (like Moses his 70 Elders) *Exod. 18. 21.* and be free from notorious and apparent Coveteousness and worldly mindedness. They should be eminent in humility and meekness, and in other Graces of the Spirit; and they should be men of pitty, compassion, of bowells and mercies; as the Apostle speaks. They must not be angry passionate persons, or men of sower, froward and peevish Spirits and carriages: for these abominations will very much blemish them, and cause prejudices in the minds of Observers. They must not be Tattlers, Medlers, nor Busy-bodies in other mens matters; neither should they be slothful, negligent or careless of their own. These are some of their necessary qualifications.

Quest. What are the Duties of Church-members, and how ought they to demean and carry themselves towards their Ruling Elders?

Ans. When they do rule well, and use their office, power, diligently, faithfully and profitably, for the peace, welfare and prosperity of the Church, the encouragement of the Ministry, propagation of the Gospel, and the honour and Glory of Christ, as they are indispenfibly bound to do: they are worthy of double Honour,

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Love and respect from the Church: and they ought to give it to them, heartily and sincerely; in obedience to Christ, who injoyns and requires it, *1 Tim. 5. 17.* as also for their work and office sake, and for the Lord Christ his Sake, whose Officers they are; whose Image they bear, and whose work and service they do, and are employing themselves in. They must have, not only simple honour, love and respect from you; but double. They must have much more then any private brethren have, *when they rule well*, and that upon a two-fold account. 1. As they are Christ's and your Elders and Officers; and in a sense, do represent the Lord Jesus Christ to you in and by their work and office-power in the Church. 2. As, or because they rule well, and use their office-power for your profit and benefit. Do they carefully, diligently and industriously attend to, and follow their work, and seek your good? then remember, that you owe them double honour, love and respect; and see you give it to them. Moreover, Church-members should yield them their chearful subjection and obedience, to all their Lawfull commands and appointments for their good, and give them all possible encouragement in their work, and not weaken their hands and make their work heavy, and burdensome to them; but do all they can to make it easy and sweet to them; that so they may do it with Joy and not with Grief. You should also pray importunately for them, that God would make them able, willing and faithfull to and in their work, and blesse and prosper their labours with success.

cess. Do they mind their work, and labour for your good? why then it is most reasonable, that you should mind them, and give them their dues, that they may be encouraged in their work and diligence, by your duty to them. In a word, you should carry your selves towards them in all things, as to Spiritual Magistrates; and Christ's Officers to you, for your Good. As *Paul* speaks of civil Magistrates, *Rom. 13. 4.* for (says he) *they are Gods Ministers to thee for good*; so your ruling Elders are the Ministers of Christ to you for good: Therefore behave your selves towards them, and do for them as such. Not as they are Elders among you, but as they are good Elders to you, and such as rule well for your profit. Do they rule well, mind and attend to their work and duty? Why, then love, honour and respect them as such. Do they labour with, and take pains among you; and are they diligent, serious and faithfull in their office? then pray much for them; blesse and thank God for them; acknowledge, accept and esteem of them; carry your selves submissively & obediently to them; strengthen their hands and encourage their hearts, to and in their work; and do all you can and ought to do for them. Do they walk holyly, humbly, wisely, zealously and fruitfully? do you follow their examples; imitate their steps, and as much as possible, write after their Copy; and by so doing you will honour Christ, and comfort them.

Quest. What other Officers hath Jesus Christ set in his Church?

Ans. Deacons. The Lord Jesus hath in his great

great love to, and care of his Church, appointed and given to them this sort of officers also, for their comfort, profit and well being: and they need them likewise: For as the Teaching Elders may not attend mostly to their ruling work, but to *Study, Reading, Doctrine and Exhortation*; (and then not to serve Tables, *Act 6.*) so the Ruling Elders leave their work to attend to, which is not to serve Tables neither, but to look after other Church-matters and concerns as you heard before. And therefore I say, that Deacons are necessary and usefull Officers in the Church; and are distinguished from other Officers, by their name and work there. The Institution of this sort of Officers in the Church, as also their work, use and qualifications, we have an account of in *Acts 6. 3, 4, 5, 6. 1 Tim. 3. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. Phil. 1. 1.* so that we see there is such an Office, and such Officers are appointed for and set in the Church.

Quest. What manner of persons should deacons be, or what are their qualifications, by divine Appointment?

Ans. They must be men of honest Report, full of the holy Ghost, and wisdom, Acts 6. 3. They must be grave, not double-tongued; not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy Lucre, holding the Mystery of Faith in a pure Conscience. Even so must their Wives be grave, not slanderers; Sober, Faithful in all things. Ruling their Children and their own houses well, 1 Tim. 3. 8, 9, 11, 12. These are some of the necessary qualifications of Deacons in the Church. You that are Deacons, mind these things; and consider

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sider seriously if you are so qualified for that Office in the Church of God. If you are not so qualified, humble your selves before the Lord, entreat him to qualify you with his holy Spirit, and labour in the use of all good means to obtain what is yet wanting in you, for the well and profitable performance of your work, as becomes such Officers in a holy Church of Christ's.

Quest. What are the Deacons works in the Church?

Ans. In general, their work is to *serve Tables*, *Acts 6*. But more particularly, 1. They are to provide for and distribute to the poor of the Church according to their necessities; *Act. 6*. and not to suffer any of them to want through their negligence. And therefore they ought to enquire what poor there are in the Church, and what their wants are, and accordingly to supply them. In order to which they should receive the Church's contributions, and wisely consider if what they do receive from them, will supply the wants of the poor, and satisfy other emergencies in the Church. And in case they do not, to acquaint one of the Elders, that he may speak to the Church to augment their stock; that so they may have enough to supply all occasions, as need requires. 2. They should not only look after the poor to get money for them, from the Church: but to ease the Church, they should see that such as can work, and so help to maintain themselves, do so: and such as can work but will not (if any such be) to reprove and admonish them; and untill they do set to work, and endeavour to

to live and provide for themselves as well as they can, to detain all supplies from them; that their wants may provoke them to labour. But in case there are any poor in the Church, that would labour, and not be chargeable to the Church, but cannot get employment; the Deacons ought to do their utmost from time to time, to get them work, and to give them all the encouragement they can therein. And by their so doing, they may be servicable to the Church, and to the poor, who would live by the labour of their own hands, if they could find employment: and who are as loath to be burdensome unto the Church, as they are, that they should be so. 3. They should often visit the poor and see how it is with them, encourage and comfort them, and do all they can to strengthen their hands, and refresh their hearts, under their poverty, and the Temptations that attend it. Doubtless poverty hath many great and strong Temptations; and therefore the poor have need of their supports, kindneses and encouragement; to bear up their hearts from sinking despondencies. Surely! Deacons have more to do for the Church, and the poor thereof, then to receive contributions and send it by others now and then to such as want, when they are required so to do. What need is there of such qualifications as the Gospel requires in them, for their doing of that? If they have but eyes and common reason, they may do their work, if that be all, without any of the afore-said qualifications. But their requisite qualifications do declare sufficiently that they have other work to do in the Church, for which they

must be so qualified. But when men have once gotten the name of an Office, they take up with that; but seldome or never mind, endeavour to know and do the work of their office. They must be even driven to mind it, and angry if any tell them of their neglects. Surely! such officers have a sad account to make, and contract much blame, shame and guilt on their names & Souls; and they must repent in Dust and Ashes, and even shed Tears of blood for their Sin, if ever they be Saved. Yea, the Straits, wants and Temptations of the poor, which are occasioned by the Deacons neglects, will cry out against them, and condemn them. Oh! Sirs; remember whose Officers and Stewards you are, and for what ends you are set in the Church; consider your ways, what you ought to do; what you do, and what you leave undone. 4. They should provide conveniences for the Church to worship God withall, and see that the Church suffer no detriment by any of their neglects. 5. Their work also is, to see that the Church perform that part of their duty to their Teacher or Pastor; namely, to give him his due of subsistence, according to that charge, in *Gal. 6. 6.* *1 Cor. 9.* *Rom. 15. 27.* and to collect it for him. To provoke the negligent, and exhort such as are backward to their duty. Their work being (as was said) to serve Tables, this must needs be a part of it. And it is well known, that this work of the Church and Deacons, is necessary for the upholding and encouraging of the Ministry. These are some of the Deacons workes in the Church, to which they should attend with all possible

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wisdome, diligence and faithfulness, as their work and businesse. For God will require an account of them, how they have carried themselves in the Church, and performed their work there.

Quest. What is the duty of Church-members towards their Deacons, in the Faithful and conscientious discharge of their duty and trust?

Ans. They should love and honour them, as Christ's and their Officers, and give them all encouragement in their work. They must not load and burden their work, by discountenancing, blaming or penuriousness towards them: or by distrusting them, and speaking contemptibly of them. But they should chearfully confide in them, and pray importunately to God for them: that they may be enabled to do their work, and faithfully serve Christ, and his Church in their place, as they are bound to do. Surely, brethren, Christ cannot endure to see any of his Church-Officers, who act and serve the Church faithfully, from from and under him, and by his Authority and appointment, to be slighted undervalued and discouraged. But it is his Will that they should be loved, honoured and respected, for his own, and their work and Office sake; and that they should find all possible encouragement from you. The neglect of which is Sin, and disobedience against Christ's Laws and Authority, and your shame and losse.

CHAP. VII.

Of the great & indispensable duties of Church-members amongst themselves, or to one another in a Church Relation.

Quest. **W**hat are the duties of Church-members to one another?

Ans. There are two great ends Christ Jesus had in his Eye, in appointing and ordaining such a near Relation, union and communion for, and among his people, as a Church-state and relation is. First, To capacitate and enable them to perform their respective duties and works, 1. to God, 2. To men, or to one another. Secondly, to encourage them so to do, and that with greater ease, freedom, order and satisfaction, than otherwise they could do. By virtue of their near Relation to, and intimate acquaintance with one anothers persons, faith, principles, and conversations, they can worship or glorify God together, with one mind and mouth, as commanded, *Rom. 15. 6.* and walk together with God in all his ways, in the same mind and judgement, *1 Cor. 1. 10.* which else they could not so well do. So likewise, to perform their respective Duties to their Officers, and mutual duties to one another as brethren united together in a holy Band, for those ends and purposes. Their duties to one another, as Brethren and Sisters enchurch'd, and knit together in one single and individual Corporation, under the Laws and

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Lordship, Rule and Government of their only Head and Law-giver the Lord Jesus, are all laid down in his Gospel for them, and made their Duties only by his appointing and commanding them to be observed and practised by all Church-members ; and in all their observations of them, they must have a choice and singular respect to his holy Will, and Sovereign Authority in them ; without which, their doing of them are not acts of Obedience to him, but the products of their own Wills and Pleasures. Now then, we will enquire into them, endeavour briefly to bring them to light, and present some of them to you, who desire to know and obey them in Truth.

First, The first and greatest, is *love*, love and spiritual Affections are the holy Cords that tie the hearts, souls and judgments of Believers one to another. This is that, which (together with the fear of God) makes them avoid all things whatever may give just offence, or Administer griefe to one another, and that which provokes them to follow after the things that make for Peace, and the things that tend to Edification. Love is the *Bond of Peace*, Eph. 4. 2, 3. 'Tis that which (together with Divine light and truth) causes Church-members to draw together, as in one yoke, and unanimously, as with one heart and soul, to design, aim at and carry on mutual and common good in the Church, Phil. 2. 1, 2. 1 Cor. 13. 3. Without this love one to another, they cannot, will not Cement, nor long abide and live together, as a Church in Peace and Unity, nor promote any good work among themselves ; with-

out heart knitting-love one to another in the fear of God; they will receive and entertain Jealousies and Suspicions one of another, and put the worst construction on whatever is said or done; and they cannot walk together comfortably and profitably to and with one another, where and when they are entertained. Therefore it is absolutely needful and necessary for all Church-members, to be firmly United, and constantly joyned together in cordial love and charity; *which is the Bond of Perfection* to and in all other Duties, *Col. 3. 14.* God highly commends, and strictly commands this love one to another, and puts it into the hearts of his peculiar People, that they may do what he commands.

1. God highly *commends* it wherever he finds it, in Act and Exercise, *1 Thes. 4. 10.* And indeed (sayes he) *ye do it towards all the Brethren; Col. 1. 4, 8. 2 Cor. 8. 7. 1 Thes. 1. 3.* to which Duty, (and to manifest his high approbation of it) God hath promised a great Reward, *Heb. 6. 10.*

2. God *commands* it, and vehemently exhorts to, and urges it on them, almost every where in the Gospel. Oh! how importunately did the Lord Jesus enjoin it, and frequently press it on his Disciples, when he was on Earth? *Joh. 13. 34.* *A new Commandment give I unto you: what is that new Commandment? why, that ye love one another, as I have loved you; that ye also love one another.* And in *Joh. 15. 12, 17.* *This is my Commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. That is, take the Pattern of my Love to you*
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for your love to, or in loving one another. I have, and do love you (1) with *great love*; *Joh. 15. 13.* so do you likewise. (2) My love to you is *free*, without any desert in you: let yours be *free love*, without carnal Respects, one to another also. (3) My love to you is *real, hearty and unfeigned*: So let yours be to one another also; *Rom. 12. 9.* 1 *Pet. 1. 22.* (4) My love towards you, is an exceeding *fruitful love*. I loved you so, as to labour, toyl, sweat and dye for you. I loved you so, as to humble and debase my self for you, and all to do you good: so must you love one another with a fruitful profiting love. For as I have loved you, so you must love each other. (5) My love to you, is a *pitying, sparing, and forgiving love*; a *forbearing and tender hearted love*: so must yours be to one another, likewise *Col. 3. 12, 13.* (6) I love you with a *warm and fervent love*: so do you, *love one another with pure hearts, fervently*, 1 *Pet. 1. 22.* (7) I love you with a *holy spiritual love*; not as you are Men, and have reasonable Souls; but as new Men, who have my Image stamp't on, and my holy Nature in you, and as you are *made perfect by the comeliness and beauty that I have put upon you*, *Ezek. 16. 14.* 2 *Pet. 1. 4.* So do you love one another, with a holy spiritual love, namely, because you are a lovely and a holy People unto me. (8) I love you with a *constant and unchangable love*, and that with a notwithstanding all your weaknesses, yea unkindnesses to, and unworthy walkings before me. Whom I once love with a special and peculiar love, I *continue to love for ever*, *Joh. 13. 1.*

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And I have engaged, that not any thing *shall separate you from me and my love*, Rom. 8. ult. Thus you are bound to love one another, even as I have loved, and shall alwayes love you. And as the Lord Jesus commanded and enjoyned this by the word of his own mouth; So likewise by his Apostles. They do frequently and vehemently urge and press this Duty on Church-members every where, and back all their Commands (from Christ) with most strong and cogent Arguments, Rom. 12. 9. Rom. 13. 8. 9, 10. Eph. 4. 2, 15, 16. Eph. 5. 2. 1 Thes. 5. 8. 1 Pet. 1. 22. 1 Pet. 3. 18. 1 Joh. 3. 23. Chap. 4. 7. These are a few of the many places, where you may find this great Duty enjoyned on Believers and Church-Members; which they are indispensibly bound to observe and obey. And therefore God *sheds this love into their hearts*, and Teaches them to improve and use it, in loving one another, 1 Thes. 4. 9. Rom. 5. 5. For he gives his People, and enables them to do that which he commands and requires of them: and therefore, the business of such Stewards, is to use their Trust well; and all lies on their diligence and faithfulness in Stewarding of it, *as good Stewards of Gods Grace*.

Oh! That Church-members, and all other Christians would seriously, sincerely, diligently and constantly mind and practise this great and indispensable Duty to one another, in all their wayes and doings; and not lay it aside as a little, useles or indifferent matter, which they may neglect, and dispense with the omission of, at their own will and pleasure.

Secondly, As we are indispensibly bound to love one another, as you have heard; *so we are as peremptorily, absolutely and indispensibly bound to walk lovely, and encouragingly towards one another*: that by our unlovely and unworthy walkings, we lay not stumbling-blocks in the way of love, or discourage such from loving us by our unlovely carriages, as do conscientiously aim at and endeavour so to love us, as Christ commands them to do. But that our Behaviours be such in all things, as to invite all to love us, as holy, humble and blameless Saints and Brethren in Christ. Very many Professors expect much love from their carnal and spiritual Relations, and are greatly displeased at them, if they fancy they are denied it, and cast the blame on them; whilst they mind not, care not how unlovely and discouragingly they walk and carry themselves towards them. But believe it; the Lord Jesus expects, and he hath made it their Duty, to walk lovely towards one another, as well as to love one another. Church-members are bound to love one another, as holy, spiritual and lovely Objects; which they cannot do, unless they see, or have good grounds to believe them to be such indeed. When they walk carnally, how can they love them as spiritual Heavenly persons? and when they walk and carry themselves proudly, in their Words and Deportments; how can they love them as the meek and humble Members of Jesus Christ? If their love must be holy and spiritual, then undoubtedly the Persons or Objects of it must be such also. For is it possible, or doth God require
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me to love a Proud, Churlish, Touchy, Peevish and Cross-grained Professor, as much, and with that complacency, I can or may love an humble, sweet, meek and patient one? Can I, or is it my Duty so to love a sowre, crabbed, contentious and quarrelling Relation, as a peaceable, quiet, affable and courteous one? Is it possible for me to love a vain, frothy, worldly Professor, and one who cares not how unlovely, undesirable, yea, and in many things, how contrary he walks to me and my love; as I do, or may do another Professor, who is Spiritual, Grave, Serious and Heavenly? surely! we cannot love persons as holy, spiritual, humble, useful and Heavenly persons are to be loved; unless they appear to be so in their words, deeds and carriages towards us; neither doth God require us so todo.

Therefore we ought to be as careful of, and see that we walk lovely towards one another, as to love one another; that so we may as much as possible, provoke and encourage each other to love one another; *Heb. 10. 24.* and remove out of the way of love, all such stumbling-blocks, as may any way Impede or Obstruct it; that so we may encourage all to love us, really, strongly, sincerely, fervently, holily, spiritually and constantly: freely, easily, and that with delight and complacency For otherwise, as it will be most absurd and irrational for us to expect it from them, so it will be impossible for them so to love us. And by our own contrary walkings and carriages, we wrong our selves of their love to us, and tempt them to sin against God, and injure their own Souls.

Souls. We shall grieve their hearts, and tempt them to withdraw their love and kindness from us, and thereby offend God, grieve and vex his holy Spirit, and by little and little to withdraw his loving Countenance from us.

Thirdly: Christ hath charged and strictly commanded all Church-members, to live in Peace: *to be at Peace among themselves, and to follow Peace with all men, and as much as in them is, to live peaceably with all men.* Oh! how often, and with what vehemency, doth the Lord Jesus and the Holy Ghost, by the Apostles, press & enjoin this Duty, especially, among Church-members, every where in the Gospel? see some Texts, *Psal. 34. 14. 1 Pet 3. 11. Rom. 14. 19. 2 Cor. 13. 11. 1 Thes. 5. 13. Heb. 12. 14. Eph. 5. 3.* And the Apostle tells us, that *God hath called us to Peace*; not only to the Peace of God in our own Souls, and amity with him; but with one another, *1 Cor. 7. 15.* such walkings and carriages one to another, when in love and Obedience to God, are pleasing to him; but *strife, discord and contention, and such like practices, are most hateful and abominable to him, Pro. 6. 16, 17, 18, 19. These Six things doth the Lord hate, yea Seven are an abomination to him.* And what is the Seventh? why, *sowing discord among Brethren.* This wickedness is so hateful to God, as the words cannot sufficiently declare his abhorrency of it. Hence we often find the Holy Ghost by Paul earnestly dehorting Church-members from all debates, strifes, and contentions one with, or against another; especially in their Church-meetings, *Phil. 2. 3. Let nothing be done through*

through strife or vain glory, and vers. 14. *Do all things without murmurings and disputings,* Rom. 13. 13. And the word of God doth every where condemn it as a most accursed Weed, and venomous Plant; a *Cockatrice* egg, and devilish Serpent. Pride is that Womb that bears it, *Pro.* 13. 10. and the lusts of the heart, *Gal.* 5. 20. and the Devil is the Father and Authour of this accursed strife and contention, *Jam.* 3. 14, 15. Blessed Paul was much afflicted to see any of it in the Churches of Christ, as knowing from whence it sprang, and what the fruit and end of it would be? what wrong it would do their Souls and what Reproach it would lay them under? How it would reflect on Christ and his wayes, and render them all contemptible? How it would hinder their profit, and produce many vile *Monsters* among them. As *Envy, Wrath, Railing, evil surmisings, Hatred, Back-bitings, Swellings, and Divisions.* And therefore labours to prevent the growth of them, and to pull up by the Roots, these pernicious Weeds; and that by Counsels, Reproofs, Cautions, Instructions, and Dehortations from them; and presses them (and us) by all cogent Arguments, to avoid contention and strife, and follow after Peace to the utmost of their power.

David tells us, that it is a most pleasant and lovely thing, for Brethren to dwell together in unity, *Psal.* 133. 1, 2. Then how much more pleasant and lovely is it, for spiritual Brethren to live and worship God so together. Christ came into the World, and lived here a *Peacemaker,*

maker, and charged all his followers to follow his steps; pronounces them *blessed* that do so, *Math. 5. 9.* and *accursed* who do the contrary. He is a lover of Peace and Concord, especially in his holy Temples; where he will not have a *Hammer* heard: but he is an implacable hater of Strife and Discord, and will not endure it in them; much less will he *winck at such, as are the first sowers of these Seeds.* The truth is, strivers and contenders in the Churches, are the Devils Agents, and notorious *Mischief-makers.* They do a world of mischief to a Church where they are, and are real Plagues to, or in it. They greatly hinder Edification, and spoil the Order, Beauty and Harmony there. Contenders and Disputers in a Church, are the proud self-conceited men, who are vainly puffed up with high thoughts of themselves, and their own abilities, and that because they have gotten some light and notions into their heads, with a volubility of speech, but without spiritual wisdom and humility in their hearts: and therefore they conceit that they are wiser than the Church, and more able to Manage and Order Church Affairs, than their Elders. Their Pride and self-conceit makes them slight and contemn their Teachers, and to raise up in a Rebellious contention with, and opposition against them: As the Prophet complains, *Hosea. 4. 4. For this people are as they that strive with the Priest.* They think nothing can be well done, unless they have the doing of it; and therefore when any good work is upon the Wheel, they will do all they can to hinder it, as some Churches can sadly experience. Well then,

then, take heed of strife and contention, and follow Peace and Concord one with another, especially in your assembling together about Church-work. Get humble hearts, and then you will not be contentious, but peaceable.

Fourthly: *Sympathize with, and help to bear each others burdens, as need requires.* You are not to live to and for your selves, in a Church-State only; but to and for one another too. You are commanded to remember them that are in Bonds, as being bound with them; Heb. 13. 3. and them that suffer Adversity, as being your selves in the body. You are strictly commanded and charged by the Great God, to rejoyce with them that rejoyce, and weep with them that weep: and be of the same mind one towards another, Rom. 12. 15, 16. And look not every man at his own things, but every man also on the things of others, Phil 2. 4. And let no man seek his own, but every man anothers Wealth, 1 Cor. 10. 24. Bear ye one anothers burden, and so fulfil the Law of Christ. You must make, and account your Brethrens Crosses, Losses, Temptations and Afflictions, your own; and when they want and call for your helping hand, to support or lift them up, being fallen, you must give it them freely, readily and chearfully, and not turn a deaf ear to, or hide your eyes from them and their cries. For this was one of Gods holy and Gracious ends in appointing Churches, and bringing you into Church-fellowship, and so into acquaintance one with another, namely, that you might be fellow-mutual-helpers and comforters one of another, For if you are cruel to, or careless of one another

another in Affliction; the Lord Jesus will require it at your hands, and take it as done to himself.

Therefore, seeing it is the will of Christ, and our indispensable Duty to one another; let us put on Bowels of Mercies and kindneses, Col. 3. 12. and be tender hearted, Eph. 4. ult. And as Peter speaks, be pitiful and courteous to each other, 1 Pet. 3. 8. Let the same mind be in us, and let us shew the same affection to one another (in measure) that Christ Jesus hath shewed, and still doth express to us. We know that he is full of loving kindneses, pity, sympathy and bowels of mercy and compassion to us; Psal. 103. 13, 14. Phil. 2. 1, 2. to shew his Members, how they should be, and carry themselves towards one another; and to oblige and provoke them to do so too. Oh! my Brethren: we should much abound in this grace also.

Fifthly: *Exhort, and comfort one another.* For so is the will of God concerning you. This is not only your Teachers Duty and Work, but yours also, to each other, Heb. 10. 24, 25. And let us consider one another, to provoke unto love, and to good works; but exhorting one another. This Work and Duty must be diligently and frequently done, Heb. 3. 13. But exhort one another daily, while it is called to day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, 1 Thes. 5. 11. Wherefore comfort your selves together, and edifie one another, even as also ye do, vers. 14. Now we beseech you Brethren, warn them that are unruly; comfort the feeble minded, support the weak. My Brethren you
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stand in continual need of one anothers Exhortations and Consolations; and if you mind and manage this work well, you may be very useful and profitable one to another, greatly oblige and knit your hearts to each other, and occasion many thanksgivings unto God thereby. We are exceeding apt and prone to fall backward, and therefore need each others hand to draw us forward. To grow cold and dead hearted; and therefore need each others help to warm and quicken us. We are apt and ready to stand still, and lye down a *Napping*; and therefore do greatly need one anothers awakenings and holy provocations. When this duty was frequently and conscientiously practised by the Saints, they did thrive and prosper: but since it hath been so woefully neglected, the contrary is apparent in the lives and carriages of the Saints. Well then; do you revive this work all you can. Set it forward with all your might. and improve all your opportunities to the profit of each others Souls: for you see that it is your indispensable Duty.

Sixthly: *It is the will of your Head, the Lord Jesus, that you should be each others Keepers. That you should watch one over another; Admonish and Reprove one another, as need requires. I do not mean, that you should pry into one anothers secrets, or be busie-bodies in other mans matters. No, for that is hateful and abominable; and God hath forbidden you to do so, 1 Thes. 3. 11. 1 Pet. 4. 15. 1 Tim. 5. 13. But my meaning is this, namely, that you watch over one anothers Walkings and Con-*
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versations. That if they do well, you may encourage them. If ill, you may by Counsel, Reproofs, Admonitions, Instructions, and Exhortations, labour to mend them: and do all you can, to convince and bring them to the real sight and sense of their miscarriages, as also to unfeigned Repentance: By which good work, you will do them, the Church, yea Christ himself, good and acceptable service. You should carefully mind and observe, if *all do keep close to their Duty in the Church*, or are remiss and negligent. If they carry themselves holily, righteously and soberly in their Conversations: or on the contrary, they are frothy, vain, proud, extravagant, loose, unjust, idle, careless, or any way scandalous. You should strictly mind and observe, if there be any *Tattlers, Back-biters, or sowers of Discord*, or such as speak contemptibly and slightly of their Brethren, especially of their Elders, and their Administrations. As also, *such as combine together, and make parties or factions in the Church; or endeavour to load or obstruct any good work*, which their Elders are promoting of, for the Glory of Christ and the good of the Church; and deal with them accordingly. You must mind and carefully observe, if any be fallen under Sin or Temptation, in any case, and not let them alone, but presently set your hand to help them, to succour and restore them; Gal. 6. 1. *Brethren; if any man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one with the Spirit of meekness; considering thy self, lest thou also be Tempted. Take heed of that Cain-like Spirit; who when God*

asked him where his Brother *Abel* was? *Replies, am I my Brothers keeper, Gen. 4.* You will be Tempted to this evil towards your Brethren, namely, to imagine that you are little or nothing concerned with them, and that if they do otherwise than they should, the guilt will only lie at their doors; but you shall be blameless. But my Brethren, it is not so. You are not to be indifferent in this matter. For assuredly, you are appointed to be keepers of one another. You are bound to prevent and put a stop to sin in one another: or else your Brethrens sins, which you do, or may know if you will, and the wrong they do to themselves thereby; yea and the Reproach and scandal that may come to the Church thereby, will lie at your Doors, and be cast on your Souls, because you neglected your Duty, and did not in season prevent it, as you might have done; if you would.

Look not every man on his own things, but on the things of others also, Phil. 2. 4. And seek not your own, but every one anothers Wealth, 1 Cor. 10. 24. Now we exhort you Brethren; warn the unruly, 1 Thes. 5. 14. and Admonish the disorderly, 2 Thes. 3. 15. For this good work, and their wise & conscientious doing of it, the Holy Ghost commends the Church at Rome, Chap. 15. 14. And sayes God in Levit. 19. 17. Thou shalt not hate thy Brother in thy heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke him, and not suffer sin upon him. And the Apostle in 1 Tim. 5. 22. Admonishes us to take heed, that we be not partakers of other mens sins, but to keep our selves pure in Math. 18. 15, 16, 17. The Lord pres-
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ses this Duty and VVork on you, and shews you how you should perform it. Therefore, you must mind and carefully do it, in Obedience to his will, and according to your directions there, and not otherwise. You must watch, and endeavour to gain a Sinner, or sinning Member; by your first, private Admonition, in case the evil be private: and if that will not do, take one or two more with thee, and see what that will do. But if that will not do the work, nor obtain the end on thy Brothers Soul, then you are bound to bring it to the Church; that by their Teachers or Elders, they may be informed of it, in order to their dealing with, and proceedings against him, as commanded. This is another of your great and indispenfible VVorks and Duties in the Church. It is true, that this is especially the Elders VVork and Duty, but it is not theirs only, but yours also, who are private Members. Oh! therefore, be you perswaded to mind; carefully, faithfully and diligently to practise this VVork and Duty; for unless you do so, it will be impossible to keep the Church in Peace, Honour and Purity. You will do Christ and them singular service.

Seventhly: *You must forbear and forgive one another: for this is another of your commanded Duties, Eph. 4. 2. forbearing one another in love, vers. 32. Be ye kind one to another, tender hearted: forgiving one another, even as God for Christ sake hath forgiven you. And in Col. 3. 13. Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another: if any man have a quarrel against any, even as Christ forgave you, so also do yee.* Doth
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thy Brother sin against thee, or do thee any injury? thou shouldst tell him of it, examine the matter and search out the circumstances of it; and see if he did it unadvisedly, through weakness or ignorance, and without any design to wrong thee, or whether he did it wittingly, and knowingly? And until thou art sure that he did it knowingly and wittingly, or wilfully, thou must forbear censuring him, as having so done it. For else thou wilt prove a *Usurper, and a false Judge*; which Christ forbids, *Math. 7. 1, 2. Rom. 14.* But if upon an impartial search, thou finds him to have wronged thee through ignorance or weakness, thou must Judge charitably of him, and carry thy self towards him, as God doth towards thee under thy weaknesses and ignorances. Thou must not be rash and severe towards him, either in thy carriages or censures. But if it clearly appear upon impartial enquiry, that he did knowingly and wilfully do thee wrong; then thou must carry thy self towards, and deal with him, as with a wilful Transgressor. Thou must lay his sin before him, and shew him what Lawes he hath Transgressed; what evil he hath done thee, what wrong to his own Soul, and what offence he hath done to Christ, by breaking his holy Laws. *Admonish* him, again and again of his sin, and censure him not too severely, until you find him obstinate and stubborn. For until then, you must forbear him; whilst you are waiting on him, and on God for him, to convince him of his sin, and give him Repentance unto life. But if your endeavours be blessed to those ends, you must readily for-
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give him. And if he be once truly, and savingly convinced of and humbled for his sin: be sure, that he will most freely own and confess it to thee, as well as to God, and endeavour to make thee amends, and give thee all possible satisfaction for the wrong he hath done thee. And this he will do. not by constraint, but freely, willingly, and of his own accord, without thy seeking to him. For it is a certain sign that a person is not powerfully and savingly convinced of, and humbled for his sin, while he hangs off, and must be fought after to make satisfaction to such as he hath wronged. For were his heart really melted into the will of God, he durst not, yea could not be quiet, until he hath given all possible satisfaction to the wronged, *Luk. 19. 8.* But now in case he remain obstinate, and will not hearken to Reproof: what are you to do then? why, then he should take one or two more, and deal with him; and if that will not do, to bring it to the Church; that they, by their Elders, may see what they can do with him. But if they cannot prevail on him to repent and make satisfaction: then I think the offended may prosecute the Law against him. *For the Law is made for the lawless and disobedient, 1 Tim. 1. 9, 10.* But yet he should be still in a readiness to forgive him when-ever he shall repent; pray and hope that he may repent, and when he doth so (although it be long first) Actually and Cordially forgive him, and renew his kindness and Brotherly love to him, as if he had never sinned.

Eighthly, *It is your Indispensible duty, to hearken too, and receive Instruction, Admonition and Reproofs one from another also.* For if some are Indispensibly bound, at some times, to give them: Surely; others who need them, are as much bound to receive them. *Prov. 8. 33. hear Instruction and be wise. For he that despiseth Reproof, sinneth, but he that keepeth Instruction, walketh in the way of Life, Prov. 10. 17.* And the Scripture tells us in *Prov. 12. 1. Whoso loveth Instruction, loveth knowledge: but he that hateth Reproof is brutish,* such as turn a deaf Ear to Reproofs, are marked out for *Scorners* in *Prov. 9. 8. and he that is often reprov'd, and yet hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy, Prov. 29. 1.* such as turn a deaf Ear to Reproofs and admonitions, or slight and refuse them, do thereby rebell against, trample upon, and contemn an ordinance of God, and a means of his appointing, for their happinesse, and so they murder their own Souls, with the means that are given to save them. You are bound to hearken to, and receive, your brethrens Reproofs, Counsels and Admonitions; withall Humility Patience and freedome of Spirit: with all love, Meekness and Thanfulnessse to God, and the givers of them. For they are great mercies to you, and they are your real and profitable friends; such as seek your good, and endeavour to prevent your destruction. And therefore, I wonder not at the Scriptures saying, that such as refuse Instruction and Reproof, shall suddenly be destroyed; and that without remedy: for they do despise the means (as in their present case)

case) of their Salvation, and which are handled out to them, to prevent their destruction. And certainly they *shall have Judgment without mercy*, (as *James* speaks) who do slight the means given them, for such great Ends, and by hardening their hearts against them, do render them uselesse to their Souls, and thereby oppose and crosse Gods ends.

Oh! then, do not you so wickedly. When a Brother or Sister, see or hear you sin, and they come to you with the Lords healing playster, to cure you, receive it; thank them, and blesse God for it; apply and improve it, as *David* did *Abigals* and *Nathans* Counsels and Reproofs, *1 Sam. 25. 2 Sam. 12.* and see that you repent and humble your selves in Dust and Ashes. For if the contrary heart and carriage be found in you, under just Reproofs, Instruction & Admonitions, toward God or men: know for a certainty, that you are in a very evil and dangerous case; yea you are in the high way to ruine and perdition. Oh! Friends, let it never be said justly, of any of you, that you were reprov'd and admonish'd of any known Sins, by any Brother or Sister; and that you refused, and slighted it; justified your selves in your Sins and apparent Transgressions, and were displeas'd with, or angry at such as admonish'd you, and did their Indispensible duty to you, under your Sin, for your Salvation.

Ninthly. *Pray one for another*, and that with a real Love, fervency, and Importunity, as you do, or should do for your selves, *Jam. 5. 16.* *Confesse your faults one to another, and pray one for*

for another, that ye may be healed. Oh! with what serious minds and strong Affections, should all Church-members, pray one for another. They must be much *in building up one another, and praying in the holy Ghost, one for another, Jude 20.* They should carry one another on their hearts, *at the Throne of Grace,* especially such as are under Affliction: the whole Church in General, and the Teachers in particular, *Heb. 13. 18.* and wrestle with God for them. For (as was shewed) one Church-member must make anothers case his own, and be of a publique Spirit towards, and for the good of all: and as in other things so in this of Prayer. For they have the Spirit of Prayer given them, Audience and Interest in Heaven for others, as well as for themselves. This is another duty to one another.

Tenthly, *You should often meet together for holy discourse and Prayer.* Two or three, or more; Brethren by themselves, and Sisters by themselves, in and for those God-glorifying, and Soul-profitting exercises. This was wont to be the Commendable practise of our forefathers, and of some that are now alive, when Christ, Duty, Heaven and Religion lay warmer on their hearts, than now they do. And they made *happy earnings* of their holy endeavours. Now if it was a much commended Practise in them as it was; why then is not the same found in and among you, in this day? was it good in them, and will it not be so in you too? hath not God promised his Glorious Teaching, warming, strengthening, sanctifying, and comforting presence with such as do so?

Math.

Matth. 18. 20. would not your meeting together, and so exercising your selves, turn to a better account, than your present practise doth? do you not find time enough, to visit one another, and meet together, to discourse and talk of things which you should not? Do you not visit to tell some idle stories, to tattle of other mens matters, which do not concern you; and it may be, to do that which is worser; namely, to Back-bite some persons, and to prejudice hearts against your Teachers and their Work, if they do not please you? And will not such meetings have bitterness in the end? Yea, do you not thereby, exceedingly deaden & carnalize each others Souls, by these things? So that instead of bettering one anothers Souls, and furthering them towards Heaven in your meetings, you hinder them, and make them much worser. Oh! consider, and lay this matter to heart, I do beseech you: now while you have time to mend what is amiss. Consider my friends both how you do, and how you may and ought to improve and exercise your selves, in your occasional and designed visits and meetings; and what account you will be able to give of them at the last day. Is it not your great Iniquity to tempt one another to Sin, and wrong your Souls, mispend your pretious times and seasons of service for God, and one anothers spiritual profit? when you might if you would, have improved them to those ends. We read in *Acts* 16. 13. *That Women meet together to pray:* but now 'tis accounted almost a false Doctrine. Men and Women were wont to discourse and speak often

often of the things of God, and their own experiences, one to another, *Mal.* 3. 16. But where are now any such (almost) to be found? persons can find time enough for every thing, but their greatest VWorks and Duties. But to speak plainly; 'tis not our want of time, but of hearts. VVe are strangers to God in secret, loose our hearts in the VWorld, and cloy our selves with carnal cares and earthly matters: and therefore cannot, will not attend with any delight or freedom of Spirit unto our Duties. This will be found at the bottom of all our neglects, and excuses for them. But remember, that your Souls need this practise, and the use of these means, that it is your Duty, and will be (if well used) very profitable to you.

Eleventhly: *Encourage one another by your examples, to keep close to, and be constant in your publick work.* VVhen ever the Church meets, or are by their Teacher Summoned to meet together, for the Celebration of the worship of God: they are bound so to do (excepting in extraordinary cases) that may hinder any. For else there can be nothing done, nor any good order kept, for the glory of God, and the edification of the Church. Now then, when the Church ought to meet together, you ought to be present, and not by your wilful or careless absence give an evil example to others, and tempt them to do the like. For thereby you will cast a stumbling-block in their way of Duty, and encourage, strengthen and embolden them in their neglects also. If it be our Duty to provoke one another to good works,

works, by our Exhortations, then also by our Examples and practises too. *Examples* are powerful encouragements to Sin or Duty, to good or evil; to Omissions or Commissions, 2 Cor. 9. 2. Heb. 10. 24. 2 Chron. 12. 1. 1 Chron. 29. 3, 9. If they are good examples, then they provoke others to good, but if evil, then they are powerful to provoke others to do the same. VVhen a Member is in the Congregation, and sees such a Member wanting there, then he is tempted to take the same sinful liberty too: and so in all other cases. All Church-members are indispensibly bound, ordinarily to attend on the Ordinances of God in that Church to which they are joyned. For as they are there called and set, so their work and Duty lies there. *Not forsaking the Assembling of your selves together,* Heb. 10. 25. and because some are apt to neglect so to do; therefore (says the Apostle) *do you provoke each other, to your Duty.*

Twelfthly: *You must be charitable to the poor, that are among you, and freely contribute to them, according to your Ability, and their Necessity.* You are indispensibly bound to impart your help and assistance to them, and give them a little of your Estates. As you are *Stewards* for your selves, so also for them. It is a Debt you owe to God, and a Duty to them: you will comfort them thereby, but you will much more profit your selves, than you can possibly profit them. *It is a more blessed thing to give, than to receive,* Acts 20. 35. It is your honour and happiness, that God enables you to give to them, but it is their Affliction, that they are
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necessitated to receive from you. You stand on the Advantage ground by them, both as to work and wages. And therefore, thou has little reason to despise them, or grudge at thy distributions to them. Thou art their *Steward*, and a part of what God hath given thee, was designed and intended for them, *1 Pet. 4. 10.* And therefore (sayes God) *Deut. 15. 7, 12. I command thee to open thy hand wide unto thy Brother, that is waxen poor by thee.* (Read the words at large) observe likewise these Scriptures, and diligently mark and consider them, *2 Cor. 8. and 9. Chapters. Gal. 6. 9, 10. Heb. 13. 16. Prov. 19. 17. Psal. 37. 26. Psal. 41. 1, 2, 3.* You must not only give, to keep them alive in misery, but make comfortable provisions for them; that they may have enough to keep them from the Temptations of Poverty, pressing wants, and to enable and encourage them for, and in their work and Duty, to God and men.

Thirteenthly: You must carefully, watchfully, diligently, and conscientiously beware of, and avoid whatever may give any just offence or scandal to one another. For we are charged, to give none offence, either to Jew or Gentile, or to the Church of God, *1 Cor. 10. 31.* And sayes the Apostle, take heed, lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block, *1 Cor. 8. 9.* And our Saviour tells us, that woe to them by whom the offence comes, *Math. 18. 7.* and charges his Disciples, to take heed and beware of giving any offence to his little ones, *vers. 6.*

You must not only mind that which you ought to do, but that which you must also leave undone.

undone. For although you should strive to do never so much good, yet if that while you are not careful of eschewing evil, you will do a great deal of hurt, and pull down with the one hand, that which you seem to build up with the other. And you must also see, that you do one Duty as well as another. For although you may be frequent attenders on the Ordinances of God in the Church, yet if you come not timely to them, or carry your selves unreverently in them, you will give just offence. So if you should be charitable to the poor, and yet be negligent in publick worship, you will give offence.

But to be brief: know, that you must take heed and beware of such evils as these, and avoid them. For they do all of them carry a Brand in their fore-heads, and scandalous mischiefs in their hands, both to your own and others Souls. And therefore you should mind them, endeavour to know and avoid them, that they be not found in you.

1. As 1. Proud, lofty swelling, disdainful and haughty words, carriages, walkings and deportments: For they are grievous and provoking evils, and such as will justly offend all the observers of them.

2. You must avoid all sullen, fowre and churlish Language and Behaviour towards all sorts of persons, or else you will offend them: For it is an evil that is altogether unbecoming the Lambs of Jesus Christ.

3. You must beware of a cross, captious, and contradicting Spirit, and carriage: There are too to many such Members in Churches; whose

whose peculiar Excellency, or rather vileness lies in this; and who delight in a singular perverseness of mind and discourse against the work, sense, proposals and judgment of the Church, and the Elders thereof. That so they may be heard, and may hear themselves talk, and from the Pride and haughtiness of their Spirits, they may seem some bodies in the Church, or in other Company. But this is very scandalous to their Brethren, (excepting such as they have made of their Faction to joyn with them in their unfruitful works of darkness) and very reproachful to themselves; as they will find at long run; But I must hasten.

4. You must beware of, & avoid, peevish, froward and touchy carriages, words and deportments, in private and publick. For they are very scandalous and offensive.

5. You must not withdraw your selves from your place, work, and Duty in the Church, nor absent from the VVorship and Ordinances of God there, in their times and seasons. For that is a most scandalous and pernicious evil, as you heard before. It hath an innumerable Company of evils in the Womb of it, and that do attend it: which I have now no room to mention. And it is a direct Transgression of Gods Laws, Rules and Orders in his Churches, besides the scandal and evil consequences of it.

6. Take heed of that filthy sin, of speaking evil of one another behind their backs; you must not be Whisperers or Back-biters, nor speak of the real or supposed evils of one another, but to their faces, or before them;
until

until you have done your duty to them in secret. For if you should, you will greatly provoke them, and greatly stumble, offend and scandalize such, as you so speak evil of.

7. You must beware of speaking slightly and contemptibly of one another, either to their faces, or behind their backs. For men, yea the best of men, will not, cannot patiently bear contemptuous words, and undeserved slighting carriages from their Brethren.

8. You must beware of and avoid vain, foolish and frothy discourses; for they are very scandalous and offensive to gracious hearts.

9. Take heed of Earthly-mindedness, and greedy pursuits after worldly things; for as they are offensive to God and pernicious to your own Souls: so they are scandalous and grievous to beholders.

10. Take heed and beware of strife and contention amongst your selves; for that will do a world of mischief, and produce many evil and wicked fruits.

11. Take heed of grudging at, or envying one anothers prosperity; for thereby you controul God himself, and give occasion of great offence to your Brethren; when they shall see, that they cannot receive mercies from God, without your envyings and grudgings.

12. Be sure to deal justly with all men, and give to every one his due: defrauding is a very reproachful and scandalous sin. Contract not Debts, and delay, or deny to pay them; For if you do, you will scandalize your Brethren, and cause the name of God to be evil spoken of.

13. Be sure to make good, and perform all your peremptory promises to men, and take heed and beware of breaking them, or failing and disappointing men of their just expectations from you; for that also will be scandalous and offensive.

14. Take heed of taking into a marriage-bond, such as are apparently in an unbelieving and carnal state and condition; For that also is very offensive to holy serious men: although some make light of it.

15. Take heed of idleness and slothfulness in your Callings; For that will prove a pernicious and scandalous sin to others, and your own souls too.

16. Take not up a Report against one another, that is scandalous, nor give an ear unto Tatlers and busie-bodies, nor be you busie-bodies in other mens matters your selves; For if you do, you will give great offence.

These are some, and but some of the scandalous evils that you must carefully avoid, as a duty that you owe to God, to your Brethren and to your own souls. I could have named many more, but I find these the most common amongst Professors.

Now as you must avoid these and other evils; mind and practise the said Duties, as Church-Members one to another: so you must seriously mind the *manner, reasons* and *ends* of doing them also. The reason of your so doing, must be the will of Christ your Head and King, because he hath so commanded you. And the *principle* of all you do, must be love to him, and to the souls of your Brethren. The *ends* must

must be to please, honour and exalt the Lord Jesus, and to profit and benefit your Brethrens souls, and maintain the Credit and Reputation of the Church, and the Worship and Ordinances of God therein; and to preserve Peace and Purity among your selves. The *manner* must be thus; namely, wisely, dutifully, chearfully, obediently, freely, willingly, humbly, holily, seriously, diligently, sincerely, and perseveringly. For you should be as careful of doing your Duties to men in a right manner, as you are of performing your Duties immediately to God so. I can but mention these things, because I have exceeded my intentions in others. The Lord God bless them to you all.

CHAP. VIII.

Of the Ordinances and Worship of God, in a Gospel-Church.

Quest. **W**hat Ordinances of Divine Worship, hath God given to, and appointed for a Gospel-Church, to be observed by them?

Ans. First, walking together in constant, Cordial Communion, and Gospel-Order in a Church-state, in Brotherly love, peace and oneness of spirit, in the frequent and joynt Celebration of all the worship and appointments of Christ, is certainly an Ordinance of Christ and their Indispensible Duty, as hath been already shewed. Believers may not enter

their names among Christ's Disciples, and then take liberty to do what they please ; omit or neglect their place and duty there, when, and how they will, and content themselves with having their names enrolled in a Church ; come among them, and go from them at their own will and pleasure. No, but it is the will and Ordinance of our Lord Jesus, that they should constantly, and conscientiously in obedience to his holy will, abide and continue there, holding Communion or Fellowship together, as a united and entire body, or spiritual Corporation, and joyntly with one mind, heart and soul, observe and celebrate his Ordinances and Worship, *Heb. 10. 24, 25. Acts 2. 42, 44, 46, 47. Rom. 15. 6. 1 Cor. 1. 10.*

Secondly : *Preaching and hearing the Gospel.* It is true, that this is not a special Church-Ordinance, or an Ordinance appointed for and given to Churches ; or to Believers, exclusive of all others. For it is the great Ordinance of God for the converting, quickning, and bringing sinners to Christ, *Rom 1. 16. 1 Thes. 1. 5.* By this Ordinance God conveys his special Grace, and the spirit of Grace into sinners hearts. By it he opens blind eyes, unstops deaf ears, enlivens dead Souls, and convinces carnal men of sin, Righteousness and Judgments, *Acts 26. 18. Joh. 5. 25. Joh. 16. 7, 8.* And by it he turns them from the power of Satan unto God, and works them to, and for his own use ; makes them Vessels of Honour, and translates them out of the Kingdom of darkness and the Devil into his own Kingdom, *Col. 1. 13.* This great Ordinance of Preaching and hearing the Law

Law and Gospel, is given and appointed to make, fit and prepare sinful men for Membership with Christ, & his holy Gospel-Churches. For until they are moulded and qualified by the word and spirit, they are no way capable of either, considering what condition all men are in by sinful nature; namely, *dead, blind, filthy, vile, hateful, enemies to God, Children of Satan, under the Law, the curse and wrath of God, strangers to and ignorant of God, Christ, Grace, Duty and Gospel-holiness.* But although hearing and preaching the word of God, be an Ordinance of God to others, namely, such as are not en-Churched, to prepare them for that State, and the Duties and Priviledges thereof; yet I think it may be called a Church-Ordinance also. For the Lord Jesus hath by his sovereign Authority set this Ordinance in his Gospel-Churches, and committed the Preaching of it unto men there, namely, to such as he is said to empower and send, to give unto, and set among them for the work of the Ministry, *1 Cor. 12. 28. Acts 20. 28. Eph. 4. 10, 18. Act. 14. 23. 1 Tim. 5. 17.* The Ministry of their Pastors and Teachers is their own Ministry; and these Officers being given to them by Christ, and set in his Churches for their sakes, they may call the Ordinance their Ordinance, such Officers theirs, and their Ministry theirs, as having a peculiar Relation to them; which is one of the Churches peculiar priviledges, and which they ought highly to prize, and bless God for. Now as some men are gifted, empowered and sent out by Christ, to convert and turn men to Christ, who may not have any

Relation to Churches, as their Pastors or Teachers, so there is the special and peculiar Ministry of Pastors and Teachers given to, and set in the Churches; whose work and business lyes there, and but occasionally else-where to other men. *Take heed* (sayes the Apostle) *to the Flock, over which the holy Ghost hath made you Overseers, to feed the Church of God,* Act. 20. 28. The ends of these Officers, and their Ministry in the Church, is not intended for the calling and regenerating of Church-Members; for (as was shewed) they must be effectually called and regenerated, before they can be meet Members of a Holy Temple of God: but to build up and carry on the work of Grace in their hearts, holiness and fruitfulness in their lives and walkings towards God and men; To confirm and establish them in the Truth and Faith of Christ, which they have received, and to instruct and enlighten them further in all Christ's and their own souls concerns. This Ordinance of God is intended and designed by the Lord Jesus, *and it should be so used and managed by all Teachers and Hearers continually*, to carry on the work of Grace, to convey and receive more of the *Grace that is in Christ Jesus* for them, to convince them of, and shew them more clearly the evil of sin, the deceits of their hearts, the power of in-dwelling lusts, the Wiles and Methods of Satan, the necessity of Christ and his blood, and of his Ordinances and Institutions; To shew and convince them of the Excellency, Beauty and Loveliness of Christ, and the love and grace of God to them in him; To Preach
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and bear their hearts and souls into clearer knowledge of the three persons and one eternal living God, and into more acquaintance with them; so likewise into more cordial and unfeigned, more strong and fervent, pure and constant love to him; To acquaint themselves with the nature, usefulness and proper life of faith, persuade and work their hearts to it, practically and dutifully to love it in all things, works, duties and conditions; To arm and fence them against Satans fiery Darts, and Temptations, and the worlds snares and allurements; To discover and detect self lusts, and whatever wars against our souls, and to mortify and destroy them; and in order thereunto, to know and be able, expert and accurate in the use of our spiritual Weapons and Armour of proof, which Christ hath sanctified and given unto us; in Eph. 6. and elsewhere in the Gospel; To sanctifie them throughout in soul, body and spirit, keep them from deadness, coldness, lukewarmness, and indifferency of spirit; and to prevent sleepiness and back-sliding from God, neglect of duties, and careless performance of them. This Ordinance is intended for the further informing them of the holy will and mind of Christ, and their duties to God and men, to sweeten and dispose the heart to love and practice them, and to enable them to persist in so doing without weariness and fainting; grudging or disputing, and with joy and delight; To call back persons from their wanderings, and to give them Repentance unto life. These are some of Gods holy and blessed ends in setting up this Ordinance in the Church:

which all are indispensibly bound to aim at, intend and endeavour in all their use of it. See *Eph.* 4. 10, 11, 12, 17. *Esa.* 30. 20, 21. *Eph.* 5. 25, 26, 27. *Eph.* 3. 18, 19. *Micah.* 2. 7. *1 Thes.* 4. 10. *Heb.* 10. 38. *Rom.* 1. 16, 17. *2 Pet.* 3. 18. *1 Thes.* 5. 23. *Phil.* 3. 13, 18. *Joh.* 17. 17, 19.

Thirdly, *Prayer*, Prayer to God is a Church-Ordinance. It is true, that all men are bound to pray to God both publicly and privately: the neglect whereof is severely threatned; *Jer.* 10. ult. It is a part of natural or moral Worship, which all men ought to practise continually. For as God is their Creator, and they his reasonable Creatures, he their Sovereign, and they his Subjects, and as such Creatures, are to live, and alwayes to have their dependency on him for their subsistence in this world: so they are to express and manifest their so doing, by their asking such things as they want of him. For it is a Duty and Homage they owe him, as him in whom they live, move and have their being, *Acts* 17. 28. and profess him to be their God, Protector and maintainer, and expect all things from him. They ought in all their wayes to acknowledge him, *Prov.* 3. 6. although they know him not in the face of Christ by any Gospel-Revelation. But notwithstanding this is a Church-Ordinance also, that is, they are appointed to pray publicly in their meetings, as a Church, and that not as it is a moral Duty, and agreeable to reason, and mens natural principle, but as it is a Gospel-Ordinance of Christ appointed for them, and they commanded by him to ob-

observe it among themselves. This the Church of Jerusalem was commended for, *Act. 2. 42.* And they continued in the Apostles Doctrine, and fellowship, and breaking of bread, and in prayers; and in *Acts 12. 5.* 'tis said, that prayer was made without ceasing of the Church unto God. Now this Ordinance in the Churches of Christ must be observed and practised, as an Ordinance of his appointing, who is Lord and Head of them, and because it is his Sovereign will they should so do, without which they cannot in the doing of it, approve themselves unto him, as his obedient Children and Subjects in his house. For whatever work they do, and whatever Ordinance they observe in the Church, they are indispensably bound to respect his will, and have their eye on his Authority therein, as the ground and reason of what they do; and because he hath so commanded and appointed, therefore they do it. Moreover to the well performance of this Duty, and right observance of this Ordinance in the Church, there is required a peculiar Ministerial gift in the Teachers or Overseers of the Church. For they cannot rightly perform this part of their work in and for the Church, by their natural and common acquired gifts and parts, but in and by the spirit and his Ministerial gifts and grace conferred on them, for their profitable and right performance of their Works and Duties in the Church, *Rom. 8. 26, 27.* *1 Cor. 12. 6, 7, 12.*

Fourthly, *Baptism*, water-Baptism is another Church-Ordinance, to be holily, reverently, dutifully and spiritually observed. The power

power of administering this holy Ordinance of Christ is given to *Pastors and Teachers*, and only to such as are authorized and called to administer other Ordinances, and perform other parts of the work of the Ministry, Authoritatively, by virtue of their Commission from Christ received: Any Disciple of Christ may not administer it, but such as are set apart for, and appointed to the work. For they must do it, and it must alwayes be done by men in office power, *Matth. 28. 18, 19, 20.* And *Paul* tells us, *Eph. 4. 11, 12.* That Christ gave some *Pastors and Teachers* for the work of the Ministry, and edifying of the body of Christ. And we never read in Scripture of any other, than such as were called to the work of the Ministry, that did Baptize any. This Ordinance is instituted and appointed in *Matth. 28. 18, 19.* and it was confirmed by the constant practice of the Apostles and Teachers afterward, *Act. 8. 18. Act. 10. 47, 48. 1 Cor. 12.* Baptism is a Sign, Token and Seal of the Gospel-Covenant, (as Circumcision was *Rom. 4. 11.*) for the assuring and confirming Believers of the reality of the Covenant, and the gracious purposes of God to perform it, and convey unto them all the Grace and blessings of it in his time. To raise and strengthen their hope in Christ and God the Father by him, that God is and will be their God, and also the God of their Seed, according to that glorious grant and engagement of God, in *Gen. 17. 7.* *I will establish my Covenant between me and thee, and thy Seed after thee in their Generations, for an everlasting Covenant, to be a God to thee, and to*

thy Seed after thee. To which Covenant, God set his Seal, vers. 10. This general sum or head of the Covenant given to Abraham; and his Seed in their Generations, we have produced and brought in by the Apostle Peter in his first Sermon after the coming of the Holy Ghost on him and other of the Apostles, in *Act. 2. 39.* when he was about the setting up of Churches and Church-Order, Laws and Ordinances among them (sayes he) *Repent yee and be Baptized; why? for the promise is unto you, and to your Children, and to all that are a far off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call:* which is the same for substance given before to Abraham. And Paul told the *Galatians* *Chapt. 3. 14.* *That the blessing of Abraham is come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ.* This Ordinance of Baptism, is of meer Institution, and made known to us in and by the Gospel. The Light and Law of nature knows nothing of it; neither are we bound to observe it, but upon the command and appointment of Christ, which is sufficient for us, and we need no further warrant for our observation of it.

Fifthly, *The Lords Supper* is clearly another Church-Ordinance. And indeed it cannot be rightly and orderly administred and received, but in a regular Church-state; we never read of any Believers that received it, or any Officers that administred it, after Christ's ascension, but as they were congregated, en-Churched, embodied and formed into a holy Temple: but we read of Churches celebrating it; as at *Jerusalem, Acts 2. Corinth. I Epistle 11.* and elsewhere. We find the Institution of this
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Ordinance in *Matth.* 26. 26, 27, 28. *Mark* 14. 22, 23, 24. *Luk.* 22. 17, 18, 19, 20. *1 Cor.* 11. 23. to the end. In this last Scripture we have many weighty things of and concerning this great Ordinance (1) The Institution its self. (2) The time when, the same night in the which he was betrayed. (3) The Institutor, namely, the Lord Jesus. (4) The manner of it: 1. The Lord Jesus's own practise, *He took, blessed, brake and gave the Bread, and said, take, eat, this is my Body.* 2. By commandment, *this do ye in remembrance of me.* (5) Who should receive it, and how persons should be qualified and prepared for the reception of it. 1. With light and faith: They must be able to discern the Lords body, the ends and use of the Ordinance, and to make suitable and pertinent application of all to themselves. 2. They must be able to examine themselves, and actually to do it, and be in a state and practical fitness and readiness to meet Christ in it, to thank and praise him, and to shew forth his death until he come. (6) The danger and peril they are in who eat, and drink, and use this holy Ordinance unworthily. 1. They are guilty of his Body and Blood. 2. Of their own damnation. (7) We are informed of some of the sad effects their unworthy receiving of this holy Ordinance had on some of them: *for this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.*

Sixthly, *Singing of Psalms and Hymns and Spiritual Songs*, is another Church-Ordinance or Institution of Christ, *Eph.* 5. 18, 19, 20. *Col.* 3. 16. *Mat.* 26. 30. *Mark.* 14. 26. This is a spiritual Ordinance and Duty; yea it is a heart-warm.

warming, Soul-refreshing, Spirit-raising, and grace-quickning Ordinance. To the well performance of it, much special grace and diligent exercise of it, as also the spirit of grace is necessary. Much wisdom and spiritual understanding, life and vigor, care and watchfulness is requisite; sincerity and faithfulness, spirituality and heavenly-mindedness is needful for our acceptable observance of it to God, through Jesus Christ, 1 Cor. 14. 15. Col. 3. 16. Eph. 5. 18, 19, 20. It is true, that all men ought to sing praises and thanksgivings unto God, for it is a natural and moral duty: and it is as true, that none can rightly, holily and acceptably do it, but such as are partakers of the grace and spirit of Christ; and that the Lord Jesus hath instituted it, and made it a Church-Ordinance. And as, or because he hath instituted, and made it one of his Gospel-Ordinances for his Churches, that therefore they ought so to observe it.

Seventhly: *Holy discourses and heavenly conferences among the members of the Church*, is another Church-Ordinance, which all are bound to mind and practise, as they have ability and opportunity: for the observation and celebrating of which, they should seek for occasions and seasons to meet together, and endeavour to promote it: and when they have them in their hands, to use and improve them to the glory of God, and their own mutual profit; and that because it is their Lords Ordinance for their good: The neglect of which is (doubtless) one of the procuring causes of those witherings, languishings, and most dreadful decays in grace

grace, and woful back-slidings, which are
 notoriously evident among Church-members.
 This useful profitable Ordinance, was once in
 esteem & much accounted of by Believers; but
 it is now almost laid aside & forgotten by them;
 it was their delight, but now their burden.
 They made happy earnings of it to their Souls,
 but now they fancy that they have no need of
 it, that there is neither duty nor priviledge in it.
 But however, it is and shall ever be an Ordinance
 of God, and their observation of it, their
 priviledge and duty, Jude 20. *Building up your
 selves in your most holy faith,* 1 Thes. 5. 11.
*Wherefore comfort your selves together, and edifie
 one another, even as also ye do.* See also, vers. 14.
 and Heb. 3. 13. Heb. 10. 24, 25. Mal. 3. 16,
 17. Church-members must take heed that they
 meet together for the better, and not for the wor-
 ser, as the Apostle told the Corinthians, 1 Cor.
 11. 17. that they so improve their occasional
 and determined meetings, as to profit and bet-
 ter one another. This holy Ordinance of Jesus
 Christ should be seriously, frequently, diligent-
 ly, spiritually and sincerely observed of all
 Church-members: And if they shall so observe
 and practise it, in obedience to his will, and with
 holy designs and aims, namely, to please and
 honour God, and to profit and better their own
 and each others Souls; they will find it an ex-
 ceeding profitable Ordinance to them, for the
 promoting and carrying on the grace and inte-
 rest of Christ in their hearts: and it will be an
 effectual means to encrease love one to another,
 unite their hearts and endear affections. God
 will bless and empower it, in your dependence
 on

Christ and his free grace; to keep your Con-
sciences awake, your Affections warm, and your
Hearts ready to every good work.

Eightly: Church-Discipline. This Ordinance
is instituted and appointed for the Churches re-
gular and orderly walking: for the prevent-
ing and curing disorders in them, and there is
as much need of this Ordinance and Institution
as of any other, as experience shews. And it
should be seriously minded and considered;
wisely, and diligently observed and practised in
the Church, as much as any other Ordinance of
God therein. There is no Church in the world
but is subject to disorders, and too many irregu-
larities, because the Lusts, Temptations, and
carnal Interests of some of the Member, are
strong and impetuous; which causes many di-
stempers and disturbances in the body, as may
be seen in the primitive Churches. Now Dis-
cipline is appointed by Christ to heal and cure
them, and without it the body cannot be health-
ful and continue in a good condition; but botch-
es and plague-sores will break forth, 2 Cor. 10.
8. Mat. 18. 15, 16, 17, 18, 19. Rom. 12. 6,
7, 8. 1 Cor. 5. 4, 5, 7, 13. Gal. 6. 1, 2.

These are some of the principal Institutions,
or Ordinances of Christ in his Gospel-Church-
es; which they should seriously mind, diligent-
ly and faithfully observe continually, to the
glory of Christ and their Souls profit.

CHAP. IX.

C H A P. IX.

Of the priviledges of a Gospel-Church, or the singular priviledges and spiritual advantages Believers have, or may enjoy in a Church-state and Relation.

Quest. **W**hat are Believers priviledges and spiritual advantages in a Church-state, or as enchurched and embodied together?

Answ. There are many and great priviledges and Soul-advantages for Believers in a Church-state, which they may enjoy and improve to the promoting of their present and eternal happiness. Solomon tells us, *That two are better than one*, Eccles. 4. 9, 10, 11, 12. So many knit together in a holy Band for mutual profit, are in a far better condition than when they walk singly, and alone. In Gen. 2. 18. (it is said) *that it is not good for man to be alone; I will (says God) make him a help meet for him.* So God knowing our frame, Psal. 103. 14. and what need we have of spiritual Union and Communion one with another, he hath in love and mercy, in his great pity, tenderness, and compassion to us, appointed and ordained a Church-state and Relation for us; that we might walk together in holy Brotherly love, and oneness of heart; *serve him with one consent*, Eph. 3. 9. and carry on a common mutual interest together in his fear.

First: *Believers in a Church-state shall have much more of the presence of Christ with them,*
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than while they walk in a single capacity, as so many individual persons, without a near Church Union and Communion, without their holy Band, and perfect joyning together in the same mind, heart and affection, 1 Cor. 1. 10. How often doth the word of God inform us of this? (pray read and mind, consider and lay to heart these Texts,) Rev. 2. 1. unto the Angel of the Church of Ephesus write; these things saith he, that holdeth the Seven Stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the Seven Golden Candlesticks. (Mark it) he doth not say, that he calleth and looketh into them, no: but he walketh in his Churches, in their walking with him. And Paul tells us in 2 Cor. 6. 16. That God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; namely, in the particular Gospel-Church at Corinth, formed of Saints, and sanctified in Christ Jesus; 1 Cor. 1. 2. 2 Cor. 1. 1. which is undoubtedly the priviledge of all other Gospel-Churches of the Saints, Psal. 9. 11. Sing praises to the Lord which dwelleth in Sion. And in Psal. 132. 13. 14. (says David) for the Lord hath chosen Sion: he hath desired it for his Habitation. This is my rest for ever: here will I dwell, for I have desired it. To which last recited Texts, with many other of like import, the Apostle alludes Eph. 2. ult. In whom you also are builded for a Habitation of God. For what end are they built up together? why, it is for God to dwell in. These are a few of the many Texts that speak of, and plainly declare this to be one of the great priviledges of Gospel-Churches. And it is no small one, but very great and full of inviting and encouraging force

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and efficacy to draw and perswade all true hearted *Nathaniels* to joyn themselves to them, and walk in and with them; and to provoke and stir up all Church-members to walk and carry themselves so towards God, Christ their head, and towards one another, as to enjoy and experience the good and sweetness of it; and cause not to obstruct and hinder God, and by unworthy carriages to God to withdraw himself from them, and deprive themselves of so great and glorious a priviledge, 2 *Chron.* 15. 2. It is not enough that you are in a true Gospel-Church, to possess you of this priviledge, but you must walk and demean your selves in that state according to his will: you must walk therein *as becomes the Gospel of Christ*; and in heart and practise Conform unto his Laws and appointments: that your Father, head and King may delight to dwell with and walk among you as in his holy Temple. For he is in his holy Temple, *Psal.* 11. 4. *Eph.* 2. 21. Oh! remember, that God is great, and greatly to be feared in the Assembly of his Saints, and to be had in reverence of all that are about him: *Psal.* 89. 7. and consider how great a priviledge this is.

Secondly, *A true Gospel-Church, or Believers inchurched, are and shall be priviledged with more of Christ his Graces, Spirit and benefits, than others.* Christ will impart and distribute more fully and richly to them of his riches of love and grace, when they carry themselves obediently to him in a Church-state, than when they walk as individual and single persons. His hand and heart shall be opened wider to them, and he will abundantly bless them, when orderly walk-

walking in his holy Temples. They may hope, expect and wait for great things from him in his holy walkes, Gardens and Galleries.

And that *First*, because he dwells there. There he dwells and walks (as you heard before) and be sure where the King of glory keeps his Court and place of residence; where he makes his abode, and that with greatest delight and complacency, as he doth in his Gospel-Churches, there he will communicate and impart most of his riches and choicest loves and favours. The consideration of which, made *David* so earnest and importunate in his desires and prayers to be in the house of God, which he preferred much above and beyond all other good in the world, *Psal.* 63. 1, 2, 3, 5. *Psal.* 84. 1, 11. *Psal.* 27. 4. There he knew that God would meet him, and he should meet God. There he expected to find the fullest, clearest, comfortablest, and the most constant presence of God, and there he expected to obtain and enjoy his love and favours also: for *God is great in Zion*, *Psal.* 99. 2. namely, great in glory, praise, renown, and in the distributions of his favours.

2. Because, they ly in the way of them, and wait at *wisdoms gate*, and at *Bethesda's-Pool*. Believers in a Church-state are waiting on and for their Lord and King, and for his favours and blessings, in the way and ways he hath commanded them, and appointed to bless them in. And therefore their receivings must needs be more abundant from him, *Psal.* 133. ult. *As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the Mountains of Zion; for there the Lord commanded the blessing; even life for evermore.*

Every Ordinance of Christ is as a full Brest, golden Pipe, and Honey-Comb, which conveys and yields abundance of Milk and Honey, of Cordials and water of life, to nourish, strengthen and refresh the City of God, by which they are, or may be made fat and fruitful. The Springs, Treasures and Fountain of love and grace is opened in and to the Churches, and there Christ Jesus causes the *Horn of his Davids to flourish*, Psal. 132. 17. In a Church-state, Believers live in the streams of all Gospel-Ordinances, and therefore they may grow there, as *Witows by the Water-courses*; Esa. 44. 4. for there they may *with joy, draw water out of these Wells of Salvation*, Esa. 12. 3. The more obedient Believers are to the will of their King, the more he will bless them, and communicate of himself and his Grace to them, *Joh. 14. 13, 14. 15, 16, 21, 23. Joh. 15. 7, 10.* Now in a Church-state they do give up themselves in Universal, professed and avowed obedience, to the whole will of Christ, and put themselves under all the Ordinances of Christ, and so under all the blessings of the Covenant of Grace, which are to be communicated to their Souls by them.

3. God hath promised to impart his loves and favours to his people, in their walking with him in a Church-state and Relation, in a especial manner, Cant. 7. 12. *Let us get up early to the Vineyards* (the Churches and Ordinances of God in them): *there will I give thee my love.* Psal. 92. 12, 13, 14. *The righteous shall flourish like the Palm-Tree; he shall grow like a Cedar of Lebanon.* But where shall they thus grow and

flourish? see the 13. 14. verses. *Those that be planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the Courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in old age: they shall be fat and flourishing.* Well might David say, *Blessed are they that dwell in thy house,* Psal. 84. 4. For great and glorious are their provisions, priviledges and advantages, to help and encourage them in their journey towards Heaven, God hath also promised to bless, *yea abundantly to bless his Churches provisions, and to satisfie their poor with Bread;* that is, to fill and impower his Ordinances and their Ministry, with his Presence, Grace and Spirit, that they may greatly profit their Souls, and nourish them up to eternal life, Psal. 132. 15, 16.

4. God loves & delights most in his Churches or in Believers walking together in the faith and order of the Gospel, in an inchurched state, Psal. 87. 2, 3. *The Lord loveth the Gates of Zion, more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O City of God, Selah, Eph. 3. 17. The Lord thy God in the midst of thee (viz. Zion, vers. 16.) is mighty: he will save, he will rejoyce over thee with joy, he will rest in his love, he will rejoyce over thee with singing.* Where men love and delight most, there they are most free and liberal, to such they are most bountiful and open handed, so is God to his Churches, because they are in their holy walking the greatest objects of his love and delight, of his joy and rejoycing: therefore I say, they are the subjects of his abundant grace and favours.

5. Churches, or Believers in a Church-state,

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do Christ more service than when they walk singly, and out of that Gospel-way and order. They are now his living publick witnesses: his Candlesticks that hold up his burning Candles, and they are his shining lights in the World. They are the seats and subjects of all his Gospel-Ordinances, and the ground and pillars of truth. They do publickly and openly own and profess him to be their Lord and King, and to be subject to his Laws and Authority, and declare themselves his true and loyal friends and subjects, and that before all men. They manifest in the face of the Sun, that they are not ashamed of his yoke, nor his so much despised word and ways, but own them, cleave to them and walk in them, as the only good, holy and safe ways. Many spiritual Diamonds orderly set in one gold Ring Church form, do cast their lustre and reflect their glittering light and beauty on each other, and so make a more lovely and glorious sight to Beholders. There they do, or may wait on God their Father, and Christ their Head and King, with their praises and melodious Harps, and that with one heart and soul, *Psal. 65. 1.* Their harmonious consent in breathing forth their oneness, love, faith, hope and delight into one anothers hearts, doth greatly raise heart, and animate one another, in powring out their joynt love, affections and praises into the ears and heart of Christ, which is most lovely and pleasant unto him, *Cant. 2. 14.*

6. They expose themselves to greater trouble from the World, in a Church-state, than in walking singly. A Church is as a *Beacon* set on a Hill which is visible to all beholders, and by their

their publick, practical and avowed separation from the World, and walking by themselves, they lay themselves open thereby to their adversaries wrath and vengeance. They are the Buts of their invenomed Arrows of Reproach, Scorn, and Contempt of their Malice, Hatred and Persecution. The World takes more notice of a hundred Saints walking in close and intimate communion in a Church-state, than of five thousands of others who walk singly. This is so obvious to all, as that it needs no further proof to confirm it. Now then, the more Believers expose themselves to sufferings in the Lords ways, and for his sake, the more of his presence and blessings they shall have, *Esa.* 43. 1, 2. *Esa.* 41. 10. *Joh.* 14. 15, 16. chapters. 1 *Pet.* 3. 14. 1 *Pet.* 4. 12, 13, 14.

Thirdly, As Believers inchurched are privileged with more of the presence of God, and the Communications of his love and favours, *so likewise with mutual help and assistance from one another.* Their nearness in Union, Fellowship and Communion, their knowledge of and acquaintance with each other, together with the Laws of Christ among them enjoyning them thereunto, and brotherly love resulting from all capacitates, enables, quickens and encourages them to more and constant usefulness to one another, than otherwise they could or would be. Their holy and spiritual Intimacy and Communion, begets and preserves warm, hearty and strong love and affection one to another, which inclines their hearts to mind and do their external duties to each other. It prompts and

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puts

puts them upon *sympathising* one with another, on *watching* over one another, on *exhorting*, *comforting* and *provoking* one another to love, and to good works, Heb. 10. 24, 25. to reprove, admonish, and endeavour to *heal* each other, when need requires, Gal. 6. 1, 2. to *edifie* one another, *warn* the *unruly*, and *support* the *weak*, 1 Thes. 5. 11, 14. And is not this a great priviledge and advantage to our Souls, to have such seasonable assistance one from another? Is it not a great priviledge, when I am tempted and burdened, to have my Brethrens hands under me, to support and strengthen me? when by my heedlesness I have fallen and broken my bones, wounded and weakned my Soul to have such a spiritual *Physician* to give me *Phylick*? such a good *Samaritan* at hand, to *pour in Wine* and *Oyl* into my wounds? Luk. 10. 33, 34. Surely, none who are indeed concerned in their own Souls concernments, but will easily acknowledg it is. There is or ought to be a spiritually *natural* care in sound-hearted Church-members to one another, 1 Cor. 12. 25. *They rejoyce with them that rejoyce, and weep with them that weep*, Rom. 12. 15. and *remember them that are in bonds, as being bound with them*, Heb. 13. 3. You may expect it, yea require it of one another; for you who are joyned together in Church-fellowship and relation, are as much concerned in each others Soul concerns, as the Members of the natural body, are with one another. And one of Gods holy ends in uniting and joyning them together in one body and spiritual society, is, that they might help, succour, admonish, reprove, exhort, edifie, comfort, watch over,

over, serve and heal one another; To further each other in all duties, and in the love and practice of Gospel-holiness and Righteousness; as also to preserve each other from sin and affliction.

Fourthly, *The Churches of Christ are privileged and benefited with a Ministry and Ministers of their own*: so that they need not go to strangers to fetch bread, but to such as they have a special interest in and relation to. They have Ministers, or Pastours and Elders sent by Christ, and set among them by his grace and Authority; to feed and nourish them; to teach and establish them; to admonish and reprove them; to exhort and comfort them; to watch and take the oversight of them; to Minister all the Ordinances of Christ to them; and to attend on the service of their Souls: and they are such as he hath *promised to be with all, in all their work and labour of love*, Math. 28. 20. They are such as he hath promised to bless to them, to furnish them with his Spirit and grace, and to succeed their Ministry, and prosper their endeavours to the spiritual profit of their Souls, *Psal* 132. 15, 16. *Jer* 3. 15. *Eph* 4. 11, 12, 13, 14, 15. Other Saints who walk not in the order of the Gospel, have not *Pastors and Teachers* of their own, between whom there is so near a Relation, Union and Communion. For their Teachers cannot call their Auditors their own flocks, as the Churches Pastors and Teachers may call their Churches their own. For the Churches and their Pastors and Teachers, are each others by free, hearty and mutual choice, and by cordial and mutual engagement.

Their

Their Pastors and Teachers are the fruit of their prayers and tears, and of Christ his Death and Ascension, *Eph. 4. 9, 10, 11, 12.* Churches may claim their Pastors Gifts, Authority, and ministerial Abilities, as theirs, and make use of them as their own right and property, given to them by Christ, for their good to edification. They may repair to, and make use of them in any material Soul-case or cases. However some look on, and account of this matter; yet I have ever valued it as a great Church-privilege, namely, that they have a special and peculiar Ministry of their own, whose work and business is to wait on the service and concerns of their Souls; and they being sent to them, and settled among them by Christ in love and mercy, and the fruit of their own prayers, choice and desires, they shall be, & are undoubtedly blessed in their labours, to the profit of all sincere hearts amongst them.

Fifthly: *Gospel-Churches are the proper seats and subjects of all the spiritual Ordinances of Christ; which is one part of their honour, glory and renown.* What is said of the Ministers and Ministry of Christ, is in this matter true of all other Ordinances and Institutions of Christ, *1 Cor 12. 28.* *And God hath set in his Church Apostles, Prophets and Teachers; so Eph. 4.* that is he hath appointed Teachers and all other Ordinances for, and placed them in his Churches. *The Churches are his Temples, Houses, Habitations, Vineyards, Walks, his resting and dwelling places (as was shewed):* now where doth God set and fix his Ordinances of Divine worship, but in them? To whom are Pastors and Teachers

are given? to whom is the Lords Supper and Discipline given, but to the Churches? They are the seats and subjects of them, and none else, that we can find in the Scriptures. The Lord Jesus hath given to and set among them his Gospel-worship and Ordinances: among them he dwells, and of them he expects the honour and worship due unto his name, *Psal. 29.*

2. God keeps house in his Gospel Churches, and there he hath his Household about him, waiting on, and doing honour to him: and that they might do all according to his holy will, he hath given them his Ordinances and Gospel-Institutions, to express and manifest their dependance on and obedience to him in, as to their head and King: God made the Church of *Israel* under the Old Testament the seat and subject of all his then instituted worship and Ordinances, and under the Gospel-dispensation he hath made new Testament particular Churches, the seat and subjects of all his Gospel-Ordinances. The Catholick Church as such, cannot be the seat and subject of them, for that cannot assemble, or meet together in one place to celebrate and observe them: the World, or visible unbelievers cannot be the seat and subject of them; for they are no where said to be given to them, neither are they capable (while in their state of enmity against Christ) of them: Therefore they must be the Churches dowry's, rights and priviledges, and none other persons, or societies whatsoever. Whilest Believers neglect to walk in a Church-state and relation, they deprive themselves of this and many other priviledges, and Soul-advantages: and it is no small wrong they do

do their Souls thereby. It may be said of all Gospel-Churches, as *Moses* told the Church of *Israel*, Deut. 4. 7, 8. *for what people is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things we call upon him for? And what people is there so great that hath Statutes and Judgments so righteous, as all this Law which I set before you this day?*

Sixthly: *Gospel-Churches, or Believers in-churched are privileged with safety and security.* They are Gardens enclosed, Cant. 4. 12. *A Garden inclosed is my Sister, my Spouse, a Spring shut up, a Fountain sealed.* A wall or hedge in our Gardens to secure them from Beasts and evil Men, and we are more careful of, and at greater cost and pains in and about them, than about our Fields. So the Lord Jesus lays out, and expends more care, cost and charge, in and about his Gospel-Gardens, than about others. Men are most watchful and careful of and about their Houses and places of residence and abode, where they live, expect and take most delight. Now where doth God make his abode, and Christ the Lord, keep his Court? Is it not in his Churches (as was before proved)? They are his Temples, Houses, Vineyards, Gardens, Habitations, Walks and Palaces; his delights and resting places: and will he not be most careful and mindful of them, for his own honour and glory; and their good? Believers in living on and walking with God in a Church-state, are of all persons, in the best and safest condition. They are under the greatest security from *Seductions and Satanical Delusions* from back-sliding, and Apostacies, from the Spirit of Error

Error and Heresies, from spiritual decays and witherings, from hardness of heart, or from being hardened and stupified through the deceitfulness, and ensnaring allurements of this world, *Heb. 3. 13.* For they have greater and more constant means and provisions for their preservation and security, than others have. They have more promises of being secured by their Lord and King, *Esa. 27. 2, 3. Sing ye unto her a Vineyard of red Wine. I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment: lest any hurt it, I will keep it night and day.* They have the Lords presence and glory; his love, grace and benefits frequently before their eyes, to warn, quicken and keep them awake and watchful, diligent and faithful, and they have fresh springs often flowing in upon their hearts. They are much in the eye of Christ, and he is much in their eye, which keeps an awe on them; and the frequent views of his glorious person, love, grace, Laws and Ordinances are of great use towards their safety. So also is the watchfulness, help and assistance they have from one another in a Church-state. Believers walking irregularly and disorderly, as they do, when not joyned to some true Church of Christ, they are as common fields that lye open to all sorts of Beasts, and as Souldiers walking and stragling without the Camp, ready to become a prey unto their Enemies: But in a Church-state, and walking with God therein, they are as a Garden walled in, as a Castle and City, with gates and Barrs, and as a Household of persons shut in, with doors and locks. They are hedged in with Christ his Discipline, and secured with his

his watchful eye and protection, so as that the Gates of Hell cannot so easily prevail against them, as they may against others.

Seventhly: *Gospel-Churches are very honourable Societies and Corporations.* They are exalted and dignified so by Christ, and that they are the most high, excellent, as honourable Houses and Cities in the World. They are the Houses and Households of the great *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*, 1 Tim. 6. 15. Psal. 48. 1, 2, 3. Eph. 2. 19, 20, 21, 22. A House built up, fitly framed and artificially formed of hewn stones and Timber, is much more honourable and glorious, than the materials whereof it was builded were, before they were so formed up. One holy Temple fitly framed, consisting of a hundred meet and well qualified persons, hath more beauty, glory, excellency, honour and renown on it, than ten thousand such materials have, whilst they lye scattred up and down among the Rubbish of the World. And as they do more (as it were) adorn and beautifie Christ in the World, so he doth more adorn & beautifie them. They are said to be *beautiful for Situation*: Psal. 48. 2. and *Gods holy Temples*, Eph. 2. 21. They are honoured with more of his honourable and glorious presence; with more of his holy and sweet Laws and Ordinances, and with more of his promises, power, gifts and graces. Their honour, fame, and renown is farr above my reach, and farr beyond what I can declare. They are made the keepers and upholders of his Truths, Name and Interests. Churches in their orderly and holy walkings, are terrible as an Army with Banners, Cant. 6.

4, 10. and glorious things are spoken of this City of God, Psal. 87. 3. As God said of Job, namely, *that there were none like him in the earth*, Job. 8. 1. So he saith of his New-Testament Churches, that there are not any Societies like them in the earth. For what other Corporations and Societies of men are so qualified, that have God with them, as they have? that have such a head and King, such Ordinances, Laws and Law-giver, as such Churches have? where are those Societies to be found, that God speaks so honourably of, and gives such honourable Titles to, as he doth to them? They are (or ought to be) all stones of Gold, and precious Jewels: they are *Kings and Priests*, and made up of *Royal Diadems*, Esa. 62. 3. Rev. 2. 1. Mal. 3. 17. They have the Lords name written on them, and they are called by his name. They are called the Churches of God and of Christ. What other Societies of men are there governed by such Laws, ruled by such Rulers, animated by such a Spirit, and fed with such Heavenly bread and spiritual provisions, as they are? They are the lights and glories of, or in the World, and by their joynt prayers and interest in Heaven, they are the supporters of the world. These are a few of the special priviledges of inchurched Saints, which have been dearly purchased for them with the blood of Christ, and conferred upon them by the holy Ghost; which they are bound to take special notice of, affect their hearts with them, rejoyce greatly with them, and in the Authour of them, be very thankful for, and faithfully improve them to the glory of Christ, and to their

holiness, and in their growth in grace, &c.

You that are Churches, and Church-members, are bound to consider and lay to heart your great, singular and invaluable priviledges; your unworthiness of them; the price they have cost your head and King; the ends for which they are given you; to walk worthy of them in your Church-state and Relations; and see that you walk and carry your selves honorably in all your ways towards God and men. And remember, that God gives you all these and other priviledges and injoyments, that you should be rich in good works, yea that you might abound in the work of the Lord, 1 Tim. 6. 18. 1 Cor. 15. ult. Your priviledges are singular and glorious: Oh! so let your words, carriage, deeds and performances be also; God hath dignified you; do you see that you exalt him. God hath done great things for you, so you do great things for him; you shall reap the benefit, and he the glory.

C H A P. X.

That it is the indispensable duty of all Believers to joyn themselves unto some rightly constituted Church of Christ, (if they can) together with the Reasons and ends of their so doing.

Quest. **O**ught not all true Believers to joyn themselves unto, and walk in fellowship with some holy and well-constituted Church of Jesus Christ, where they may enjoy and partake of his Gospel Ordinance?

It is their undoubted and indispenfible duty fo to do, if they have the conveniency and opportunity of doing it. They may not wilfully or carelefly neglect to do it one day, after they have opportunities offered them: they are not, cannot be difpensed withal in their Omiffions, for their wilful or carelefs neglects are their fins. They are by fuch neglects guilty of difobedience and contempt. They difobey the Royal will and pleasure of their Sovereign King and Lawgiver the Lord Chrif; and they do by fuch neglects, flicht and defpife his Love and Grace, his Care and Kindnefs. He hath provided holy Temples and fpiritual Houfes for them to dwell in, and Heavenly provifions are made ready in them for their entertainment. The doors are fet open to let in fuch Guefts, and the Servants of the great King are gone forth to bid them come away, and invite them to enter in. There ftands alfo the Mafter of the Feaft, even at the door, waiting for them; the King of glory attends there to welcome them, when they come, *Luke 14. 16, 17. Rev. 3. 20.* He gets there before them, and abides there in expectation of the prefence and company of all his Saints, *Pfal. 11. 4. Ifa. 30. 18.* He declares that it is his good pleasure, they fhould come there and eat of his dainties, that he hath bought and prepared for them, *Cant. 5. 1. Prov. 9. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.* Now that they ought to joyn themfelves to, and become holy, living and fpiritual members of fome particular Congregational Church of Chrif (if poffibly they can) will further appear by thefe following Reafons and Confiderations.

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Fifth: The Lord hath appointed, and appointed Churches for his end (among others) namely, that his called and sanctified people might be the matter of them, that they might joyn and walk together in them, and that they might be the materials of them. This state and condition is not ordained and appointed for other persons, but only for the Holy Seed; for God will not keep House with unregenerate and unholy persons, but with his own *General Iron and Royal Priesthood* he will. That particular Congregational Churches are of divine Institution, hath been already proved: and if so, then it will follow that God's people should joyn to, and walk with them; or else to what purpose are they appointed, instituted, and ordained by Jesus Christ, if none are bound in duty, yea, if all God's people (that can) are not bound in duty and compliance with the Lords ends, to become Churches, joyn to, and walk in and with them? then this Order and Institution of Christ is in vain; he hath appointed and instituted that which none are, or will be advantaged by; which surely was far from the gracious thoughts and intentions of the Lord Jesus, the Wisdom and Power of God, 1 Cor. 1. 24. For the Lord hath made all things for himself, and ordained them for his own Glory and the profit of his people. He hath made nothing in vain. It is far below him to do it; and below reasonable Creatures to imagine it. And 2. It will follow, that whoever joyn themselves to such Churches, they do it not as duty to God and their own souls, but as an act of their own will and pleasure, without any respect to, or regard

had of the Will of God, and their own spiritual good, to be guilty of Superstition and Will-worship, which God loathes and abhors. The very Institution proves it sufficiently to be our duty to join with, and become Members of some particular Churches of Christ.

Secondly: *The unanimous and universal Votes of all the Primitive Saints do prove this Truth.* Those good men that were converted to Christ by the Apostles Preaching, with, and amongst whom they lived and conversed, and such as they planted, fed and watered, 1 Cor. 3. and these both Jews and Gentiles; they do all of them by their constant practice witness to, and confirm what I say. Look where you will in the Stories of the *Acts*, where you read of the Apostles Preaching, and Men Converted; there, or in *Pauls Epistles*, and the *Revelation*, you shall find the young Converts growing up themselves to the Lord, and to one another by the Will of God, 2 Cor. 8. 5. We find them by and by in church-ed, and walking in a Church-state and relation. So in *Acts* 2. 41, 42. ult. *Acts* 5. 14. And were not all *Pauls Epistles* (that to *Philemon* only excepted, which was written upon a particular occasion) wrote and sent to the Churches; or to, and for Believers, as in church-ed and imbodyed together, that they might know how to behave themselves in the House or Houses of God, towards God, their Elders, and one another? They are expressly called Churches, the Churches of God, and of Christ, as was shewed before. Now all Believers are charged and exhorted to follow their examples and practice. *Heb.* 6. 12. *That ye be not slothful, but followers*

of them; who through Faith and Patience Inherit the Promises, that is, see and mark them in their walkings; observe how they lived and practised, and do you so likewise. Paul indeed could not abide with the Church at Jerusalem, to which he was joyned as a Member, *Acts* 9. 26, 27, 28. because he was sent to Preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. But as oft as he could, he joyned and walked with the Churches, as you may often find in reading the *Acts* of the Apostles. Now says he to the Church at *Philippi*, chap. 3. 17. *Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them who walk so, as ye have us for an ensample.* This Commandement is for you who are in Christ, that you walk as Paul and other Primitive Saints walked. If it was their duty and practise, as you see it was, (for they gave themselves to the Lord, and to one another by the Will of God that is, they Congregated and inchurched themselves, not by, or according to their own wills, but by, and according to the Will of God) then I say, it is the duty of all other Saints, and it ought to be their practise likewise. For, *whatsoever was written aforetime*, (namely, of the Saints duty and approved practise) *was written for our Learning, that we, who succeed them in their Faith and Priviledges, in their Hope and Profession, might follow them in practise also.* If we look for, and expect the same Covenant-mercies and blessings that they had, we must practise the same duties, and walk as they did. The Primitive Saints were commended and renowned for their orderly walking in a Church-state, *Rev.* 2, & 3. *Chapters*, and often else where, *Luk.* 1. 6. *1 Cor.* 11. 1 & 2.

Thirdly

Thirdly, *All Believers ought to walk in Church-fellowship, by virtue of their Marriage-Covenant.* When by the power of Grace, and the Spirits operations in their hearts, they were perswaded to make Christ their choice, and took, received and embraced him on his own terms; they solemnly engaged themselves to be his, chose his Laws and Ordinances for theirs, and bound themselves to him, to walk with him, and be obedient unto him in all things, to keep and observe, to love and practise all his Laws, and to conform in heart and practise unto all his Ordinances and Institutions; as *David, Zachary, Elizabeth*, and other Saints of God had done before them. Thus in effect do all truly-convinced, and sincere-hearted Believers do, when contracted or married unto Christ by Faith, *Psal. 119. 106. Hos. 3. 3. Jer. 30. 21. 2 Cor. 8. 4. Gal. 2. 6.* Now then, being thus bound, or having thus bound and obliged themselves to Christ, they ought for ever to do and perform, to walk and practise accordingly; which they do not until they give up themselves to one another, and walk together in Gospel-fellowship, in the conscientious Observation of all the Ordinances and Appointments of Jesus Christ. For until they do so, they walk not in universal Obedience to all the Laws and Orders of their Head and King. For besides their disorderly walking, they live in the careless, if not wilful neglect of several Duties and Ordinances given to, and incumbent on the Churches, as the Lords Supper, and many brotherly Duties one to another. You have heard before, that a true Church of Christ is the seat and subject of all

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Gospel,

Gospel Ordinances; and if so, then it will follow that thither Believers should repair for, and seek to find them; there they should walk and observe them, and no where else, excepting occasionally. For out of a Church-state they do not orderly observe the Ordinances and Appointments of Christ in what they do. Many think that they do well, and discharge their duties to Christ and their own souls, if they observe and wait on some Ordinances, if their hearts be upright with God in their so doing; but consider not the order and method, the places and waies they ought to observe and practise them in. But herein they are mistaken, and walk disorderly. It was the Will of God, that the Ark of his Covenant should be brought to Jerusalem; and David and the Priests did well in attempting to do it; but they failed in the external manner of doing it, and therefore God made a breach on them. 1 Chron. 15. 3. The Sons of Aaron did well in offering Sacrifice to God; but they failed in offering their Sacrifice with strange fire, Lev. 10. And are not these things written for our Admonition? 1 Cor. 13. 11. undoubtedly they are. God hath Instituted Churches, and appointed them to be the seats and subjects of all his Gospel Ordinances and Institutions; invited and called his people to, or into them, to celebrate them there. Now when any content themselves with the enjoyment and observation of some Ordinances and Gospel-Institutions, and attend on them out of a Church-state, as if they found them where they ought to seek them; they walk irregularly, and break their Marriage-Covenant by their careless or wilful neglects. For

how are they universally obedient to all his Laws and Ordinances, when they take up with, and only respect some of them, and such as they do observe, they observe not in due order, or in a right manner? Oh! think on this, you who live so, and what the end will be. Oh! consider what promises you have made to Christ, and what Obligations you lay under to him, and examine (seriously) your selves, if you live not in the wilful or careless breach of them, and lay your selves open to the wrath and displeasure of your Lord and King, and by your neglects provoke him to make a breach on you. O remember, what obligations you live under. *I give Him the Honour due unto his Name*, in and by universal Obedience unto his holy Will in all things. 1. You have his Will and your duty revealed and opened to you in his Gospel, and further explained by his Ministers. 2. You are greatly obliged and enjoyned by his mercies and promises. 3. You are firmly bound by your own act and deed, by your own free and voluntary Covenants and engagements; and therefore you may not live any longer in the neglect of any of Christs Ordinances and Appointments. And consider further, that while you live in such neglects, you Rob God of his Dues; you detain his Right of Homage and Service from him, which will assuredly have bitterness in the end; and instead of being called and intitled *Obedient Children*, 1 Pet. i. 14. you will incur the odious Name and Title of *Disobedient, if not Stubborn and Rebellious Children*.

Fourthly, *Believers ought to joyn themselves to, and walk in Church-fellowship for their own Souls sakes, for their own profit and spiritual benefit.* They stand in need of all Gods means to help them on in their journey and spiritual warfare, through the Wilderness of this world, as experience shews. It is well known that all Believers have their Entanglements, Tryals, Temptations, Oppositions, Weights, Burdens, and Weaknesses: The best of Saints have them, and are not a little incumbered and pressed by them. Now God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ have in their great Love and Kindness to Believers made and provided, offered and given to them futable and proper means for their support, strengthening, comfort and encouragement; to feed and nourish, to edifie and build up their Souls and Graces, and that by imparting and communicating of his Spirit, Truth, Love and Grace unto their Souls, in and by those means. They are appointed and given to them for their own profit and the glory of God. Such is the Love of Jesus Christ unto his peculiar people, as that he hath conjoynd and made their present and eternal happiness one and the same end with his own Honour and Glory in all the dispensations of his Graces, and in all his Promises and Gospel-Laws; so that they are not two, but one End and Interest, wherein his free Love and Grace shines forth most gloriously. Now as God told a Remnant among the Jews, *That he sent them into Captivity for their good,* Jer. 24. 5. So he hath made and appointed Churches, and set his Gospel-Ordinances in them for his peoples good, that they may come there

were and reap the fruits and profits of them. Therefore they ought to do it, and not upon any pretence whatsoever to neglect it; for if they refuse to come and take them, as they in *Luk.* 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21. may not the great God reprove and condemn them for their wilful neglects and careful refusals, as he did them? *He made a great Supper, a feast of fat things, Isa.* 25. bid and invited men to come eat of his Supper; but they made excuses for their neglects: so he hath made a Heavenly Feast for Believers, invited them to come, to eat and drink freely and abundantly for the supply of their wants, and making them fat and flourishing: But they will not come into his House or Houses, nor accept of his dainties, although they stand in need of it, are lovingly and importunately invited by their God and King, their Head and Husband, to come freely, dwell in his House, feed on his Banquets, lye in his Bosom, and refresh themselves with his Delights; but they will not do it. They stand off, as if they were not concerned in those matters, had no need of them, or not injoyed to come.

They frequently complain and cry out of their wants, weaknesses, barrenness, cold and dead-heartedness; of the strength and prevalence of their Lusts and Temptations, of their ignorance, sadness, and carnality. And although they have provisions made in their Fathers Houses, and in their Kings Palaces, to help and relieve them, to warm and teach them, to melt and soften them, to arm and strengthen them, to comfort and cheer them, to water & make them fruitful; yet how sinfully and shamefully do ma-

any of them neglect to come and take, to accept and make use of their love and goodness, to them? but they will rather stand in the streets complaining, than come into their Fathers Temples, where they may have supplies of wholesome food for their souls. The Lord Jesus Christ keeps House in his Churches, where he is very liberal in his distributions. In them are his *Magazines*, his *Treasuries* of Grace and Love opened. There *He gives forth his Loves*, and causes the Fountain to flow, for the enriching of the Poor, filling the Hungry, and satisfying the Thirsty. There Souls shall find Food for the Belly, and Cloathing for the Back. There the weary soul shall rest, and the troubled soul shall find peace. There the fainting shall find Cordials, and the diseased Soul shall find *Physick* to heal him. There the pained Soul shall find ease, and the weak shall find strength. There broken bones shall be set in joynt, and doubting souls resolved. There they may find the good things they want and desire, and there they may obtain satisfaction to their Souls. Would they see *Zions King* and their beloved Lord and Husband in his beauty and glory? There they may obtain their desires. Would they grow in Grace, and increase with the increase of God? why there they may obtain it. Would they be sealed up to the day of their Redemption, and have a clear *Earnest* of their eternal Inheritance? why, in a Church-state they may have it. In a word, there good men may find all good to their souls; For God will withhold no good thing from them who walk uprightly in a Church-state, and in all the Commandments and Ordinances of God there.

therein blamelessly. Well then, if it be your duty to look after, to mind and industriously to seek the welfare of your own souls; (as all will readily acknowledg it is) then it will undeniably follow, that you ought to seek it in all the ways and means God hath appointed and given to you for that end and purpose. Now what other spiritual means have you to expect and seek for such mercies and soul-blessings in? where can you expect and hope to find them; but in the Temples, Houses, Walks, Palaces and Households of your God and King? That you need them, you know, and that there you may find and experience them, you may believe. Oh! that you would be perswaded to come and see, come and tast, to come and prove the Truth of what I say. If you will not, but continue and abide as you are, practically slight and neglect the rich provisions that your God and Father hath made for you in his Churches; you are never like to thrive and prosper, but to continue in, and under your Wants, Barrenness, Ignorance, Weakness, Doubts and Fears; under your Faintings, Sadnesses, Witherings & Troubles of spirit. If you will still refuse the means, and neglect to come and take the mercies of the New Covenant; you will grieve the holy Spirit, and provoke him to depart from you, and carry away his blessings with him. It is your present and eternal good that I seek and intend in what I say, and the same end had your Lord God in appointing this condition and making such provisions for you. I wonder how Believers can, and that they dare live one day out of a Church-state, and in the wilful neglect of

so many precious and soul-enriching Ordinances and Duties: how they can satisfie themselves in their ways and walkings, and with what confidence they can draw near to God, whilst under so much guilt. I wonder how they can call God Father, apply the Promises, and appropriate to themselves the good of them, while they walk so irregularly and disobediently as they do. Surely they little mind their own souls concerns, or the Name and Honour of Jesus Christ, whilst they neglect to observe so many of his good Laws and Ordinances, and to make use of their own purchased Priviledges, and that, whilst their Souls stand in great need of them.

Object. But we are afraid that we are not fitted and qualified for Church-membership, and that we have no right to the Childrens Bread there, and therefore we dare not joyn our selves unto the holy Churches of Christ.

Ans. This may be (indeed) a great case with some, and it may be a stumbling block in their way of walking as they ought to do. They love Christ and his People, his ways and Ordinances, but dare not walk in the nearest Fellowship and Communion with them, because they think themselves unworthy of their Society and the Ordinances of God among them. Now where it is so indeed, they sin not as others do, who neglect not their duties and priviledges on this account, but on other. All that I shall say to this sort of Neglecters, is (1.) That this pretence will not wholly excuse them either before God or Men. For 1. They are no where dispensed with their neglect of duty upon that account; or they have no dispensation to neglect

to do their duty, and wait on God for his grace
to better them in his ways and means on that
account. For if they might on that account be
dispensed withal in the omission of their duty,
and using God's means to better them; by the
same rule they may neglect and claim a dispensa-
tion for the omission of Prayer, and other Du-
ties and Ordinances under this pretence, that
they cannot *worship God in Spirit and Truth as*
God requires all to worship him, Joh. 4. 23, 24.
Heb. 10. 22, and therefore they may not, will
not worship him at all. 2. It is probable that
their fears and scruples arise from the Devils
temptations and wiles, and from their own guilt-
ty Consciences. They know that they do not
walk with God, subdue their Lusts, deny them-
selves, and endeavour to know their own states
and conditions. They carry about accusing and
condemning Consciences, which the Devil sets in
with, and works them to his will and design, and
so they are afraid of God, of their duties and
priviledges; for they might prevent these evils,
and know in some degrees their states, if they
would. 3. One use and end of Church-fellow-
ship, and the Ordinances of Christ therein, is to
convey into Believers hearts the assurance of
their good states and conditions. They are ap-
pointed and ordained for them, to wait for it
in them, and for the holy Spirit to give and im-
part it to their Souls there. And therefore, un-
til they seek for it there, they may not expect to
find it; for if we use not the means, how can we
hope to obtain the ends of them. 4. If their
scruples and objections arise from real darkness
of mind, and tenderness of Conscience, without
guilt,

guilt, then I'll advise them to consider and examine what are indeed the necessary qualifications of Church members, and enquire if they are not in them in some good measure. And for your satisfaction therein, I refer you unto the third Chapter of this Book, beginning at page the 47th. and ending at page the 55, where you will find ten qualifications requisite for Church membership, and helps to make a judgment of your selves, if they be in you. Therefore read them, and try your selves by them, and know, that if you are so qualified, or if you can find these signs of grace in you, that then you are in a meet condition for Church membership, and to partake of all the Ordinances of God's House, what ever else you may want.

2. But there is another sort of Neglecters of Church-fellowship, and they are such whose neglect arise from their carelessness, indifference, cold heartedness, stupidity, and woful insensibility: and not from scruples of Conscience, or fears of their unworthiness. They see not, feel not their need of God's means and spiritual provisions; they know not the worth, neither do they see any transcendent excellency in them, wherefore they should desire them: And hence it is that they regard and desire them not; they have back-slidden from God, and He is departed from them, shines not on their souls to keep them soft and tender, nor waters them with Divine dews, to make them compliant with his Will: So that when they are called upon to consider their ways, put themselves under all the Ordinances of Gods House, and joyn in the nearest band of Communion with his People

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The most ready on so all that is said unto them;
and yet these will pretend strange things for
their Neglects also. They will have their several
objections too; and they cannot do so,
because of such and such things in the Churches.
They have their weaknesses, miscarriages and
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see great Faults among such Congregations, as
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ties, endeavour to better and mend them by
their wise Counsels and holy Conversations,
as knowing that all Churches, as Churches, have
their Buts, as well as particular Believers their
own personal Buts. This is the careless Gene-
ration of Men, who have lost their God and
hearts in Earthly things, and buried themselves
and graces under the clods of worldly cares, pro-
fits, and pleasures, and so are regardless of their
own souls, and indifferent what becomes of
them. This, together with carnal self-love and
fond affections to the good things of this world,
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pretences there are, or other obstructions pretended for them, to set a fair face on a foul matter. This Conscience will tell them, if they will hearken to it; and give it leave to speak what all it hath to say in the cases against them.

Let me then exhort you in the Prophet's words, *Hag. 1. 3. 7. Lum. 3. 40. Consider your ways, and search, and try your ways.* Ask the question in good earnest, and put it home to your own Consciences, and desire them to speak out plainly; and tell you clearly, what obstructions or matters they are, that keep you from helping to build the Lord's House or Houses, that hinder you from going up to the Mountain of the Lord's House, from appearing before God in Zion, and paying your Vows in the Mountain of his Holiness. And see if that doth not hinder you, which did hinder the Jews in Haggai's days; (what their hinderances were, you may read in that Book at large) And are they not the evils that hinder you from joyning your selves to the Churches of Christ, and celebrating his worship, and partaking of his holy Ordinances there? Are not the greatest lets and impediments within you, and some from a worldly concern without you? Do you not consult flesh and blood, and the will of the flesh in the case, and not the will of God? and do you not find a contest sometimes in you between Conscience and Self, Conscience and the World? Doth not Conscience sometimes bid you go and joyne your selves to the People and Ordinances of God, and then you think of doing so, and then appears Self and the World and forbids you, calls you back again, and puts you into another mood;

good, because you hearken to their voyce, and not to Conscience, which spake to you from God, for God and your own Souls. Well then, do not stand any longer in your Neglects on vain and groundless objections, and pretended scruples, but stick to your duty; *Give your selves to the Lord, and to his People by the will of God,* 2 Cor. 1. 5. Acts 2. 41, 42, 43. *alib.*

Fifthly: You ought to joyn yourselves to God's People, and walk in the fellowship of the Gospel with them, in the celebration of divine Ordinances of worship, *for the Lord Jesus Christ his sake,* for his Name, Authority, Interest, and Glory's sake; for that his Honour and Glory is concerned in your so doing as well as your own good. You heard before, that Gospel-Churches are his Temples, *Walks, Palaces, Delights, and Habitations;* that they are his *Golden Candle-sticks, the Seats and Subjects of his Gospel-Institutions, the Beauties of his Holiness,* and that they are his great and living *Witnesses* in the World. Now as a stately and well-built House affords much more honour and renown to a great man, than ten thousand times as many materials, whereof the said House is built, whilst they lay scattered up and down in the world; so a company of holy persons formed up into a holy Temple by the Word and Spirit, do more honour and glorifie the Lord Christ, than ten thousands of Saints can do, whilst they walk up and down as scattered stones among others. Christ accounts himself much exalted by his People, when they do it together *with one heart and mouth,* Rom. 15. 6. We ought to cause our light to shine as clearly as possible before the

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World, that they may see our good works, and glorifie God, Matth. 5. 16. The world knows not what to make of Professors, whilst they walk promiscuously and confusedly in, and with the world. They cannot so well discern them from other men, neither know they what to think of them, and conclude them to be; what they are, who they are for, and what they intend, when they are as so many individuals, as when they are knit together in fixed Congregations, and walk, live, and converse, worship God, and serve one another together as a Family and Household of God, *As Brethren dwelling together in Unity*, Psal. 133. 1, 2. and united in a holy Band. I have spoken somewhat of this else where under another head. And therefore shall only at present say, that if it be so, that Believers may more honour Christ by walking together in Gospel or Church-fellowship than otherwise, that then they are bound in duty so to walk. For if it be their duty to exalt and honour Christ all they can, as certainly it is, then they are bound to use the means whereby they may be enabled to do it. Now Christ hath given to, and set in his Churches many Ordinances of worship, and out of every one of them he expects a Revenue of Glory by his people; therefore the more of his Ordinances you have in your hand, and spiritually observe, the more is Christ glorified by you. Besides this, you are in a better capacity to *provoke one another to love and to good works*, Heb. 10. 24, 25. and to inflame one anothers love to Christ, to preserve each other from sinning against him, and reproaching his holy Name and ways by sin in a Church.

Church-state, than out of it. You will likewise be capacitated to honour the Lord Jesus more in a Church-state than otherwise, by growing in grace, and getting more Talents into your hands to Trade withall and employ for him in the Church and world, (as you heard before). Therefore do you no longer stand off, but joyn your selves to some Gospel-Church for the Lord Jesus sake.

Sixthly: You that are true Believers, ought to joyn your selves to some true Church of Christ. *for your fellow-Members and Brethren's sakes too.* You know that we are bound to do all the good we can to one another, *Gal. 6. 18.* to further each other in the way of holiness to eternal happiness. We need each others helping hand, and are set in this World to be useful and helpful one to another. Now by joyning our selves one to another, and walking together in mutual love, peace and concord, and in the same judgment (though not so in all things) way and order, in the same Communion, Ordinances and Worship, we do greatly strengthen the hands, chear and quicken the hearts of one another in our duties, under our burdens and Temptations, and help to make our yoke easie. We animate and stir up one another, and put as it were new courage, life and spirit into each other. But by our neglect to joyn in fellowship with our Brethren, by being strange to, and keeping at a distance from them, we do verily much weaken their hands, sadden, grieve and discourage their hearts, and lay them under many Temptations, troubles and disquietments, as experience shews; *We ought to bear each others*

thers burdens; and so fulfill the Law of Christ;
 Gal. 6. 2. But we may not burden one another
 either by Omission or Commission. We are deb-
 tors to one another by vertue of Christ's Com-
 mand, and our spiritual Relation to each other;
 we live not from or by our selves, & therefore
 must not live for and to our selves. I am my
 Brother's, and he is mine, as to help, comfort,
 service and usefulness one to another. Such as
 carelessly or wilfully abide out of Church-fel-
 lowship, do in a sense condemn those who walk
 in it. We ought to know and be acquainted
 with one another, that we may be thereby the
 more serviceable to each other. I am my Bro-
 ther's Keeper, Teacher, Comforter, Reprover
 and Admonisher, and he is mine. I cannot
 well live, nor ordinarily live well without his
 help and assistance; nor he without mine. We
 have our work and business to do for one an-
 other, as well as for our selves. The nearer and
 faster Brethren are link't and knit together, the
 warmer and stronger their love will be to, and
 the more care and tendernefs they will have for,
 and towards one another. Now though Church-
 fellowship be not the ground of Brethrens love
 and service one to another, but their oneness
 with Christ, and fellow-membership in him their
 head, as also his revealed will; yet it is certain
 in experience, that their near and close Com-
 munion together in Church-fellowship doth
 greatly provoke, irritate, strengthen and draw
 forth their love one to another. Distance and
 strangeness weakens love, but nearness and inti-
 macy strengthens it. Church Communion is a
 spiritual bond, that joyns spiritual men together,
 and

and greatly knits them into one; when otherwise in their walkings they are divided and like bones out of joynt. Therefore let all true-hearted Brethren joyn in Church-fellowship with their Brethren, and declare their oneness in Christ, in spirit, faith and love, by their so doing. Let them strengthen each others hands, and encourage one anothers heart in their work and duty, in their priviledges and mercies: and know that you are indispensibly bound so to do. You have Christ himself and his spirit calling you: you have your own and your Brethrens Souls calling you: you have the practice of the Apostles and Primitive Saints calling you, and (in a sense) you have the World calling you into Church-fellowship. Why then do it, and make no longer delay; for while you neglect to do it, you neglect your duties to God, to your Brethren. and to your own Souls: yea, you do practically slight your purchased priviledges and dear-bought mercies; do it speedily for Christ's sake, and for your own peace, comfort, growth and security.

Seventhly: You that are true Believers, ought to walk in Church-fellowship, *that you may be, and live under Church promises.* You heard before, that there are many promises made and given to Churches, or to Believers in that capacity; which they cannot claim to themselves, while they walk alone, as individuals and strangers to one another. God told *Solomon*, that *his eyes and heart should be perpetually in his Temple*, 2 Chron. 7. 16. But *David's* Gold, Silver, Brass and other Materials, that he had provided to build it, had not such a promise, until they

were formed up into a house for God. So it is now with living or lively materials, that are hewn and polished for to build him Gospel-Temples. They may not expect the good of all the promises, but in the wayes of God's Appointments, and their own duties. Although their being in Christ, united and married to him by faith, be the ground and foundation of their right to the promises, and all the good of them; yet the Great God gives out and imparts the Juice and fatness of them unto their Souls, in the wayes of his Gospel precepts, and appointments, that such as expect to be partakers of them, may seek all in those wayes. I have in the *last chapter* instanced in several promises, that belong unto Churches, or unto Believers walking with God in that state and capacity. As that in *Rev. 2. 1. 2 Cor. 6. 16. Psal. 92. 12, 13. Psal. 132. 12, 13, 14. Eph. 2. the three last verses*, with several others of like import. Now then, if you will partake of the good of Church-promises, you must become holy and orderly Church-members. Surely, it is your duty to look after, and earnestly to seek for them, and that where God hath promised, and you may find them. There you may obtain the milk and honey of the promises of *Christ's presence*; of making you *fat and flourishing*; of a *blessed Ministry, and the blessings of it*; of *Divine loves and sweet provisions*, and of peace and security. I could have perswaded you to joyn unto, and walk in the Churches of Christ, by other Reasons; but I think these may suffice such as are of willing hearts, and of meek and humble, soft and holy spirits.

Quest.

Quest. What ends should all men aim at, and have in their eye, in joyning with and walking in Church-fellowship, or to what ends and purposes should they become Church-members?

Ans. 1. To please and honour the Lord Jesus Christ their Lord and King in his Churches, and to shew their Respect unto him, Obedience to his Commands, and declare their dependance on him for all things, and their subjection to him in all things. Christ the Lord hath done many good works to pleasure them, exalt & honour them; and therefore they ought to do his will and their duty, to please, exalt and honour him, *Eph. 5. 4. Col. 1. 10.* This glorious end every Church-member must have in his eye and heart in walking in Churches.

2. To express their high Resentment of his favours to them, and their cordial thankfulness for them. They are greatly priviledged, and highly dignified in the Churches by their membership there, and they can no otherwise express their gratitude to their head and King, but by accepting them, dutiful and faithful improvement of them to the ends for which they were given. Good men do shew how they value them by their accepting and using them. Churches and their priviledges are not small matters in their accounts, or light matters in their esteem, but they are high and honourable in their hearts; and so are their works and duties there likewise, *Psal. 27. 4. Psal. 63. 1, 2, 3. Psal. 84.*

3. They should aim at, and design to have and hold Communion with God, and Jesus Christ the

Lord. God is known in these Palaces, Psal. 28. 3. and to be seen in these Galleries. There he opens himself, and breaks open the Treasures of his love and grace unto his people, and there he stands holding out his Golden Scepter. There he waits to meet his Spouses, to kiss and embrace them, to entertain and speak friendly to them. He meeteth them that rejoyce and work Righteousness, and remember him in his wayes, Esa. 64. 5. The wayes and walks of the Lord God are in his Churches : there he dwells, keeps house, manifests himself unto his Household, and rests himself, takes his delight, and shews forth his glory to them, and thither they should go to meet him, 2 Cor. 6. 16. Rev. 2. 1. Joh. 14. 21, 23.

4. Believers should enter into, and walk with God in Church-fellowship, to encrease and augment their grace, and to better their hearts, to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ, 2 Pet. 3. 18. and that they may perfect holiness in the fear of God ; that they may receive of his fulness grace for grace, Joh. 1. 16. and be filled with all the fulness of God, Eph. 3. 19. that they may eat of their Fathers Bread and drink of his Wine, be made fat and flourishing, and fruitful in every good work, Psal. 92. Psal. 132. Col. 1. 10.

5 To keep their hearts warm, strong and lively for God, his work and service, and that they may obtain and enjoy all encouragements for, and in their works, tryals and difficulties. To fence and arm themselves against all their Enemies assaults on them, and be enabled to fight against and conquer them in the Lord Jesus. That they may

may be enabled to run their holy Race chearfully and couragiously, and finish their course with joy, Act. 20. 24. 1 Cor. 9. 24. Rom. 8. The Son of Righteousness shines warmest on Believers Souls in the Churches of Christ, and there are more springs of joy and harvests of profit, than are or can be found elsewhere. There is a River, the streams whereof make glad the City of God: the holy place of the Tabernacles of the most high, Psal. 46. 4. There are no springs like the Churches springs, nor any harvests like the Churches harvests. The fullest, clearest and most fatning streams of living waters flow from the fountain Christ on the Churches, and the most comely and fruitful branches are, or may be found in them. They may be the warmest, sweetest, strongest, liveliest, chearfullest, fruitfullest, and the most spiritual men in the World. And that they may be such, they should joyn themselves to, and walk in the Churches of Christ.

6. That they may adorn the Gospel, convince the World, encourage their Brethren, and witness to the Truths, Wayes, Authority and Headship of Christ. This is no small thing, but they are all matters of the highest moments, and of greatest concernment; and therefore, and for these ends they should walk in Church-fellowship.

7. To augment and encrease your experiences, to obtain more acquaintance with your selves, the operations of the holy Ghost for you, and in you: and that you may be more clearly and firmly sealed up to the day of Redemption.

8. To pay your vows and make good your pro-

promises: to Perform your Covenant, and discharge your work to God the Father and Christ your head. You owe them personal and Church-homage and service: you are bound and engaged to *observe and do all things, whatsoever your God commands and appoints you to observe and do*, according to your opportunities and abilities: *Matth. 28. ult. Joh. 14. 15.* which you do not, cannot do, unless you walk in some Church of Christ, and put your selves under all his Laws, Ordinances and Institutions. But that you may so do, you put, or ought to put your selves under them, by joyning your selves to, and walking with God and his people in Church-fellowship. These are some of the holy ends, all believers should have in their eyes and hearts, in their aims and designs. They must take heed and beware of carnal self-ends in this and all other matters of Religion, which will certainly croud in, and carry a great stroke in this matter. For the Lord Jesus abhors them, and cannot endure to have his holy and spiritual matters and concernments subjected and made to serve mens carnal Interests. He will have no other aims and ends in Church-members hearts, but his own, whereby he may be glorified, and our Souls profited, and others encouraged to do their duty to him. We have no dispensation or allowance given us, to aim at and design to augment and encrease our Trades and worldly profits, or to be maintained by the Churches Benevolence, in and by our walking with them; or to greaten our names, and encrease our friendship and acquaintance among men: unless it be to capacitate us to do the more good to

to men, to have larger opportunities to serve Christ, our Brethren and our own Souls. But our aims, ends and designs must be the Lord's, namely, to please and honour God, to express our thankfulness to him for his love and grace to us, to hold and enjoy Communion with him, to grow in grace, and to be filled with all the fulness of God, to be warm, lively and strong in our duties and performances, and for such holy ends, as God requires. Thus you see that all Gods people are bound in duty to joyn themselves to, and walk in spiritual fellowship with the Churches of Christ: as also for what ends, and to what purpose they should do so.

CHAP. XI.

Shewing how Church-members ought to walk, and what Sins and Temptations they are obnoxious to in their Church-state; with Rules and cautions against them; Arguments and motives to perswade to practice the one, and avoid the other.

Quest. **H**ow ought Believers to walk in Church-fellowship?

Ans^r. I have shewed already what their duties are, and how they should carry themselves towards their Officers, and towards one another in a Church-state, and therefore shall not mention them here: but shall answer the question in these following particulars.

First, Church-members *must walk exemplarily:*
they

they should be like so many *Stars* in the Firmament of the Church. They of all persons in the world ought to be *burning and shining lights*. Their graces, gifts, words, deeds, and carriages should shine so clear and bright, so gloriously and conspicuously, as that they should have the force and prevalency of Laws on the minds of beholders, so as that they may safely & securely imitate & follow them. The Churches of Christ in the world, are as so many *Sea-marks, Pilots, & Guides*, to Men; they live more in the glory of Heaven (as the Church is called in *Rev. 13.6.*) & in the beams of the glorious *Son of Righteousness*; than others do, and therefore they should give better and clearer light, than others can.

They are much more eyed, minded, and observed than others are, and men expect, and look for more good in, and choice fruits from them, than they do from other men: They do, or may converse more with Christ, and Christ with them, than other men do, and they are partakers of greater things from him than other men are; and therefore they must be a singular People in all manner of holy Conversation and Godliness. Church-members are highly dignified, and greatly privileged; their holy Profession gives out, & bespeaks them to be a *peculiar Treasure* unto God; and therefore they must declare before all men, that they are such indeed, and not in pretence only. Their frames of heart, words, deeds, and deportments, must speak for them, & manifest them to be the same in Truth which they pretend to be. Church-members words, works, and carriages, must *praise them in the Gate*.

1. They should be shining lights in Humility

and Meekness, Col. 3. 12. Put on therefore as the Elect of God, humbleness of mind, meekness, 1 Pet. 5. 5. and be Cloathed with Humility, Phil. 2. 3. But in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves, Matth. 11. 29. Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart. Church-members must not be high, proud, and lofty; they may not think highly of themselves, Rom. 12. 3. nor cloath and deck themselves as others do; They may not carry themselves strangely or disdainfully towards men; but be meek and humble towards their Brethren, and all men in their Apparel, Words, Deeds, and Carriages; for if this part of Christ's Image do not appear in some good measure on them, they cannot have any at all. A meek spirit, carriage, and deportment is one of their Ornaments, *It is in the sight of God of great price*, 1 Pet. 3.

2. *They must shine in Zeal & Fervency of spirit*; this holy fire should burn among them. They must not be of dull, stupid, heavy, and lumpish spirits; worship God, appear before him, and hold Communion one with another, indifferently, coldly, dully, regardlessly and heavily, as if they were rather driven to their work and duty against their wills, than with their choyce, love, and desire; but *they must be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord*, Rom. 12. 11. for which some of the Corinthians were commended, 2 Cor. 7. 11 and Phinehas, Numb. 25. 11. 13. and David, Psal. 69. 9. To this they are redeemed, and for it they are purchased, Tit. 2. 14. not only to do good works, but to be *Zealous in and for them*. The Lord Jesus charges his Churches to be *Zealous Churches*, Rev. 3. 19. in imitation of himself, whose Zeal

to God did *eat him up*, Joh. 2. 17. Much holy Zeal governed and guided by much spiritual Wisdom makes a man an excellent, shining, useful, acceptable, and desirable man indeed. This should be another of the Churches beauties and comely Ornaments, wherewith they should still be cloathed, decked, and adorned in this world. If this *Diamond* do not shine; if they are not adorned with this rare Jewel; what are they worth? and what are they good for? They will be like fire without heat and light, as to their duty, work, and usefulness: They will be like *Drones*, or like Bees without stings, namely, of no considerable use in the world. All that they do for God, Men, and their own Souls, will be of little or no esteem and account.

3. *They must shine in Love and Charity too.* Love is the bond of perfectness, Col. 3. 14. the ligament and sinew, the cord and instrument that tyés us fast to God, and to one another. See that ye love one another with pure hearts, fervently, 1 Pet. 1. 22. and let Love be without dissimulation, Rom. 12. 9. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, and strength, Matth. 22. 37. The internal motive, or moving cause of all obedience and service to God, must be love to him and our duty. Joh. 14. 15. 1 Joh. 5. 3. It is true that men cannot certainly discern this Love to God in one another, but God and our own Consciences may, and must: Churches of Christ must be Churches of Love; they should be acted and animated, drawn and constrained to every good work by Love, 2 Cor. 5. 14. All the ways and workings of Jesus Christ to us, all that he doth to, or for us, is Love. Doth he in-

fract

trust us? or doth he correct us? it is all in, and from love. Love to us is the bottom, spring, and cause of all his dispensations towards us. His anger is provoked Love. Love should knit our hearts fast to our God and Head, to our duties and services, and to one another in Church-fellowship. But of this already else-where.

4. Churches must shine in that great work and duty of Self-denial, when need requires. He that will be my Disciple (saith Christ) must deny himself; Mark. 8. 34. Matth. 16. 24. Luk. 9. 26. They should be eminent and singular in Self-denial, or in denying themselves of many things for Christ, for their Brethren, and for their own souls sakes. Their Lord Jesus is the great copy, pattern, and exemplar of Self-denial, and that for them, to serve them, and promote their happiness, Phil. 2. 5; 6, 7, 8. Acts 20. 28. and without this we cannot be his Disciples. If we will not deny our selves for him and his people, he will not own us for his true Friends and Subjects. Churches must deny themselves of (1.) Their worldly Businesses and Interests, that they may wait on God, and celebrate his Ordinances of divine worship together. They must not be in their Shops, in the Fields, or about their worldly Businesses and Recreations, when the Church meets to worship God. They may not, must not be about, and doing other things, when providence calls them to worship God: Neither may they stay at home to get the world, and serve themselves, when they should be in the Ordinances of God with their Brethren, serving God, and enriching their souls with his Spirit, Grace, and Truth. But then God calls them

them to Self-denial. (2.) They must deny themselves to *reprove and admonish Offenders*, and adventure on their displeasure in doing it. There are many difficulties in the way of this work within and without, and it will require Self-denial to do it as we ought. Our hearts are averse to it, our wordly interests are against it; for we may lose a Friend as often as we do it to purpose. (3.) They must sometimes deny themselves to *help and relieve their poor Brethren*; Eph. 4. 28. The Rich to talk and hold friendly, and intimate converse and communion with their Inferiors in gifts and worldly things. Rom. 12. 16. and others to supply the wants of the Poor and Needy, which they are bound to provide for. (4.) They must deny themselves of the *Garbs and Fashions of the times* and places wherein they live, when they may prove stumbling blocks unto the weak, Rom. 14. 1. Cor. 8. They must not please themselves only, but their Brethren, (with the denial of themselves) for their good to edification, Rom. 15. 1, 2, 3. They must sometimes deny themselves of their own liberty, lest the use of it prove a snare to others. (5.) They must deny themselves sometimes of *living up to the height and top of their Estates*; especially when they have risen up from a low mean condition, to a high and rich condition; for their doing so is usually very offensive. (6.) They must sometimes deny their own *natural tempers and dispositions* also. There are some persons very much disposed to talk much in Company; they will have most, if not all the talk; they must (as they think) talk, and others must hear them; because they have a greater

volubility, and fancy that they can express themselves better, and talk to better purpose than others can. But in this they ought to deny themselves, and to be (as *James* speaks, *chap. 1. v. 19.*) *swift to hear, and slow to speak*, especially young Men and young Converts. 2. Women, especially with and before men. 3. Inferiors with and before their Superiors; for their much speaking to and before them, gives great offence. And here let me caution *Wives* to take heed and beware of that too much practised evil, namely, their too liberal and shameful talking before, or in the presence of their *Husbands*: For although they think they do thereby lay open their Wisdom, yet their Auditors are satisfied, that they do too imperiously lay open their shame; and the like do other inferiors towards their Superiors. So there are some Church-members who are naturally addicted to much *jesting*, and take much pleasure therein: But they are called to, and commanded self-denial in this also, *Eph. 4. 29.* *Eph. 5. 4.* *Col. 4. 6.* They ought to be very sober and serious, and to curb and restrain their natural bent, inclination and disposition in this & other matters. (7.) They must deny themselves sometimes of their own just rights and dues, to avoyd scandal and reproach to the Gospel, Jew, Gentile, and Church of God, *1 Cor. 10. 32.* They must not be too severe on such as do them wrong, either by detaining from them their dues of money, or other things, especially if they be poor, or much decayed in their Estates, *Matth. 5. 39, 40, 41.* They must suffer wrong sometimes, yea, and that in many things, rather than strive, contend, or dispute; they must

must put up Injuries, and sit down with loss for the preventing of greater evils, to shew the excellency of their spirits, and manifest before all men, what their special grace can do.

5. Churches must shine in *Patience and Contentation*; they must learn in every state, *there-with to be content*, Phil. 4. 11. and run their race *with patience*, Heb. 12. 1. Church-members may not shew a murmuring disquiet spirit, or a contentious quarrelling spirit any way, under any providence whatsoever, Phil. 2. 14. but take all things well that God doth, either by his own, or the Creatures hands; thus did *Job, Eli, Aaron, David, Paul*, for which they are renowned. Let your Conversation be without Covetousness, and be content with such things as you have, Heb. 13. 5. and with patience possess ye your souls; a meek and a quiet spirit is in the sight of God of great price, 1 Pet. 3. An impatient, discontented, murmuring, quarrelsome spirit, is very hateful and abominable to God and Men. They are great scandals to men, and make the guilty persons lothsome and undesirable. Certainly this should be another of the Churches Ornaments and Jewels, wherewith they should be clothed, and wherein they should shine in the world, and adorn their holy profession.

6. Church-members should shine in *Peace and Concord*; they must be *Peace-makers*, not *Peace-breakers*, where, and with whom they live and converse. They must not be *Brawlers*, or *sowers of discord*, but be lovers of Peace, and followers of Peace, and that with all men: Stirs and strifes are most pernicious and hateful evils among Church-members; they are the Devils
Seeds.

Seeds-men, and his Servants, to sow his Seed for him, *Prov. 6. 16, 19.* Peace-breakers are common Plagues, and very scandalous and offensive to all sorts of men. Oh! how often doth the God of Peace, and Prince of Peace command and charge us to *do the things that make for peace, to follow peace with all men, to be at peace among themselves, and as much as in them is, to live peaceably with all men?* They must be men of peaceable spirits, carriages, words, and deeds, that they may be blessed, *Matth. 5. 9.* and because God hath so commanded, *2 Cor. 13. 11. Rom. 14. 19. Heb. 12. 14. 1 Thes. 5. 13. Rom. 12. 18.* I have mentioned this before among the duties of Church-members to one another. But now I have a further aim, namely, to shew what spirits and practices should be found in Church-members towards all men, but especially towards their Fellow-members and their Relations with whom they live.

7. Church-members must shine in *Usefulness to men, or in Fruit-bearing.* They should all of them bear *Twins*, and there ought not to be a barren Member among them, *Cant. 4. 2.* They are not set in this world as reasonable Creatures, and maintained in it, to live unto themselves; much less are they *Created again in Christ Jesus*, called to, and set in a Church-estate, enriched and dignified with all the privileges and advantages thereof, to live for, and unto themselves. No, but they are united to Christ, and one to another in a Church-relation, that they might live to God, and be useful to men, *2 Cor. 5. 15. Gal. 6. 10.* *Do good to all men, especially to the Household of Faith.* Barren Church-members

are Incumbrances in the world, and are dead while they live; they live undesired, and dye unlamented; they are like withered Trees in an Orchard, good for nothing, *but to be cut down, and cast into the fire*, Joh. 15. 6. Heb. 6. 7. 8. They must follow every good work, 1 Tim. 5. 10. in the Churches, Families, and places where they live, *They must not seek their own things, but every one anothers wealth*, 1 Cor. 10. 24. Phil. 2. 4. They are indispensibly bound to promote the welfare, holiness, and happiness of their Churches, Families, Relations, and all other Persons so far as they can, and that zealously, diligently, faithfully, and constantly. They are *Created in Christ Jesus unto good works*, Eph. 2. 10, and they are set in the Church for the same.

8. Churches should shine in, *and with courteous and affable spirits, words, and carriages too*. For they should be like their Head, and Husband in this excellency also. Church-members must not be of harsh, sower, crabbed, & churlish spirits and behavior towards men, for that will render them odious and contemptible; but they must imitate and conform to the Lord Jesus in a holy sweetness, kindness, courteousness, and affability towards Saints and Sinners, *that they may adorn the Gospel of Christ in all things*, Tit. 2. 10. 1 Pet. 3. 8. A kind, courteous, and affable carriage and behaviour is a very comely and beautiful Garment for all such to wear about them; for it commends their Persons and Religion unto men, and makes them exceeding lovely, desirable and acceptable in all Societies; as also the good ways of God which they do profess to love, and in which they walk.

9. They

9. They should shine with *sympathizing and forgiving spirits and practices*. Their fallen Brethren, or Neighbours, who have sinned by wronging them, may stand in need of their Pity, Pardon, and Sympathy; and then they should vouchsafe it to them, and not be rash and severe unto them. They must not lay on another load on their backs, & pursue them with rash Censures, shews of Cruelty and Vengeance in words or deeds, in wrath and displeasure; but pity them, pray for them, and give them the hand to raise them up again, and bring them to Conviction and Repentance, until they appear obstinate and stubborn in their sin. The *Servant that took his fellow Servant by the throat, saying unto him, pay me my dues*, is branded for a wicked man, *Math. 18. 28. 35*. It is such a kind of cruelty as God abhors, and all holy men hate, and the world are stumbled at. Persons, as soon as they sin against us, or any way wrong us, are not presently to be the objects of our Contempt and Cruelty, or of our Wrath & Fury; no, but they ought to be the objects of our Pity and Compassion, of our Sympathy and Assistance; and when they do seriously repent of any wrong they have done us, although they cannot make any other restitution or satisfaction, we ought to forgive them, help, and comfort them, *Eph. 4. ult. Col. 3. 13. Math. 18 ult. 2 Cor. 2. 7. 10.*

10. Churches should shine in their *orderly and dutiful Walkings in the Churches*, as also in the Families where they live, and in, and towards their several Relations. Next to that mysterious and glorious Union and Relation, that is between the Lord Jesus and his people, that

which is between his People in Church-fellowship and Relation, is the nearest and greatest ; because (1.) It is a spiritual Relation and Union. 2. Because it is a Union and Relation on Christs account, and with respect to him as their Head and King. 3. Because it is an everlasting Union and Relation. Therefore in this Communion and Relation we should be most precise and exact in our walkings, and performing all the duties of it. They must keep their places in the Church, and constantly attend unto all the duties therein. They should never neglect their Church-meetings, excepting in extraordinary cases, but be present at the Celebration of all divine Worship & observation of all the Ordinances of Christ in the Church, and demean themselves before God and Men *as becomes the Gospel of Christ*. They must endeavour so to walk in the Church, in their Families, among, and towards their Relations, as that they may be blameless, *giving no offence*, Phil. 2. 15, 16. Col. 2. 5. 2 Cor. 6. 3.

11. Church-members must shine in *Diligence and Faithfulness*. Slothfulness & Unfaithfulness are scandalous sins; but Diligence and Faithfulness in our trusts and businesses, are Ornaments to our persons and professions, and to the Gospel and Holy Name of Christ, which we do profess to love and believe. Church members are eyed and much observed, and therefore they had need *walk circumspectly*, Eph. 5. 15. and beg of God *to lead them in plain paths*, (as David did) *because of their Enemies*; as (or 'tis in the Margin) those which observe me, Psal. 27. 11. They should be diligent in their work and business,

and

and what their hands find to do, to do it with all their might, Eccle. 9. 10. 2 Pet. 3. 14. Heb. 6. 12. And as they should be diligent, so likewise faithful and trusty to all that are concerned with them, so as to answer every ones reasonable expectation from them; they must be faithful and true to one another in buying and selling, in borrowing and lending, in work and business, and in counsel and friendship. Whatever Trusts they commit to one another, or is by any committed to them, they are indispensibly bound to be as faithful and true to such as to themselves. They must *render to all their Dues*, Rom. 13. 7, 8. and not in any thing *purloyn*, Tit. 2. 10. Are they Buyers or Sellers, Lenders or Borrowers, or such as are intrusted by any men in any thing? they must be faithful to their Trusts, or they will reproach the Lord Jesus, scandalize men, and greatly dishonour their Profession. These are some of the many good things, wherein they should be as so many burning and shining Lights in the world, and in the Churches.

Secondly: *They must design, aim at, and prosecute all the ends of God in appointing such a state and condition for them, their cleaving to, joyning with, and walking therein.* God and they must joyn Issues and carry on the same ends and interests. I have shewed you what ends persons should have in their eye, in joyning themselves to the Churches of Christ; or in walking in Church-fellowship; and now I say, that in this State they must practically pursue them, and that with all possible diligence, seriousness, and faithfulness. The Honour and Glory of God

the Father, and Jesus Christ their Head and King, the happiness and salvation of their own souls, are the two, or rather (as free grace hath laid it) the one great end of their so doing; for these ends are no more two, but one, and so to be believed and respected by us. This General includes many particular and subordinate ends, which in pursuance and obtaining of the General, we must have in our eyes and hearts in our walking in this state and relation. I shall not mention them here, but refer you to the next foregoing Chapter, where you may find several of them. Onely I shall add, that you must sincerely and unfainedly keep these and all other, Gods holy Ends, in your eyes and hearts, and pursue them with all your might, until you have obtained them to the highest degree you may. You must hold Communion together for these ends, and you must discourse one with another, hear the Word Preached, Pray, Sing, and receive the Lords Supper together for these ends. You must wrestle with God in secret, quicken, and provoke one another, and prepare your hearts that you may so enjoy Ordinances, and worship God together, as to obtain them in the House of God,

Thirdly : *Church-members must walk humbly with God*, Micah 6. 8 They must have a watchful eye against Heart-pride, and being great in their own eyes, because of their great Priviledges & high Dignities, their nearness to God, and the distinguishing Character that is upon them. All your *glorying must be in God*, not in your selves or Priviledges, 1 Cor. 1. ult. for all you have is but lent you. A humble heart, and
lowly

lowly spirit, is a Jewel of great account in Heaven. To such a person *God looks with delight and complacency*, Isa. 66. 2. To him he gives more grace, and fills his soul with good things, 1 Pet. 5. 5. Luk. 1. 53. The meek and humble-hearted he will teach, Psal. 25. 9. The lower any are in their own eyes, the higher is God there: The more humble-hearted any man is, the more excellent and glorious he is; the more like the most renowned Worthies in Scripture; yea, the more like Christ himself, *Matth. 11. 29*. The more humble and lowly any man is, the more capable he is of Communion with God, and of being enriched with his Grace and Truth. If you indulge the Pride of your hearts, or countenance Self-conceitedness in your selves, you will grieve the holy Spirit, and cause him to forsake you. For as a humble heart gives God his due, so a proud heart robs him of it, and takes it to himself. A humble heart is a growing, thriving, and profiting heart; it will make happy earnings of all Gods Dispensations. He that is of a meek and humble spirit, is a gainer by all Providences, & is bettered by all Occurrences: He gains by the Rod, and also by the Word; he gains by Losses, Crosses, Tryals, Temptations, Poverty, Reproaches; so likewise by Prosperity, Honour, Riches, and all other smiling Providences. If he loose without, he gains within; therefore you ought to put on, as the *Elect of God, holy and beloved, humbleness of mind towards God*, 1 Col. 3. 12. as well as humble carriages towards men, (as you heard before). For God loves to keep company with humble persons.

Fourthly:

Fourthly : *Live by Faith on your God and Father, on your Head and King ; and expect (in the way of your duty and obedience to his Commands) all the fulness of Christ, and blessings of the Covenant. Do not give place to distrusts, doubts, and fears, or imagine that God will forget you, or deny you that which he hath promised, because of your personal unworthiness. Consider, that he hath called you into fellowship, and formed you into holy Corporations, put you under his Ordinances, and made you his Households, brought you into Order, and set you near unto himself, that he might visit you and walk with you ; that he might impart his Counsels to you, distribute his Covenant-favours to your souls, perform his Promises, and fill you with all the fulness of himself : Therefore do you hang about him, and cleave to him, for he is faithful that hath promised, Heb. 10. 23. and is able to perform all his Promises, Rom. 4. 21. yea, and he is most freely willing to do it also, Micah 7. ult. Remember that God hath not brought you into his House, to famish you, or deal severely with you : No, but to nourish and feed you, to strengthen and sanctifie you, to comfort and refresh you, to teach you, build you up, care for you, and prepare you for eternal life. God is ever mindful of his Covenant ; therefore do you remember to make him your stay and trust, live upon him, and expect all promised good from him ; He would have you do so, he hath commanded it, and therefore do it in obedience to his will, Psal. 37. 3. 5. 7. Rom. 1. 17. Heb. 11. 38. 1 Pet. 5. 7. His hand and heart will be open to you, and from his Fountain of love*

Love & Graces shall flow Rivers of living waters into your souls, *Zach. 13. 1.* He will always care for, and watch over you for good; he will water you every moment; he will keep you night and day, *Isa. 27. 3.* Oh! then trust in him at all times, and in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will not fail to direct your steps, *Prov. 3. 6.* cast all your care on him, for he careth for you, and the peace of God shall keep you, *Phil. 4.* Expect, and look for your purchased and promised portions in your Fathers House, in walking in his Family-order, and under the Government thereof, under the Laws and inspection of the great and gracious Lord thereof. In all your waitings on him in every Ordinance of his, be sure to believe, hope, and wait for his Presence and Blessings. When-ever you ascend the Mountain of the Lords House, to meet the God of *Jacob*, and to present your King with a Thank-offering, be sure to carry Faith with you, go with much Faith and Hope unto him, and do as Children do, whilst in their Fathers House; they live on their Father for Food, Raiment, and all other bodily supplies. So do you in your Fathers spiritual House, live on him for all provisions, mind your duty, and trust him with your promised all.

Fifthly: Let your Praise wait for your God and King in Zion, *Psal. 65. 1.* and do not neglect to go up to his Temples with your Sacrifices, when the Tribes go, or are called up thither; then, I say, do you be sure to go up with them; stay not behind, nor tarry at home, when others go up; go with your Brethren when they go, that it may be said, as in *Psal. 84. 7.* Every one (namely,
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of the Church) *appeareth before God in Zion*, and be sure that when you go, you go not *empty-handed*, *Exod. 23. 15. Exod. 34. 20.* If you cannot present your King with a Lamb for a Thank-offering, carry him two Turtle Doves with you; if not able to carry two Doves, then carry with thee *two Mites*, as the Widdow, the poor Widdow did, *Mark. 12. 42, 43, 44.* But if thou hast not two Mites to carry with thee, to present to thy God for a Free-will or Thank-offering, then go abegging to him for one; but in any wise go to your Church-meetings with your Brethren, tarry not behind them: For if you do neglect to do so, you rob God, break your Covenant, offend your Brethren, and wrong your own souls. You must go up, because you are called to go, and that you may meet God in *Zion*, and receive his blessings, *for there he commands them*, *Psal. 133. ult.* Oh! it is sad indeed, when persons shall pretend to enter into Churches, take upon them the observation of all the Laws and Ordinances of Christ there, solemnly and publickly promise and engage to walk in all the Commandments and Ordinances of God with his people, and yet shall dare wilfully to neglect their place and duty therein, and to pay their Vows to their God and King, *Psal. 65. 1. Psal. 61. 5. 8.* Such as are good Governours of Families and Corporations will carefully mind if all within them do answer to their calls, and perform their duties, when called so to do. So doth the Lord Jesus Christ in his Churches, He summons them by his Ministers to appear before him, wait on, and worship him together, and bring him a Church-offering and ser-

service, and narrowly observes who comes, and who neglects it; how thy come, and with what frames of hearts, & to what ends, as the 2. & 3. Chap. of *Rev.* shew. And if he find any wanting that might come, or see them come carelessly and superficially, he accounts himself slighted & disobeyed, and his Love and Grace contemned and undervalued. God expects that you should be constant in Church-meetings, and not decline them at any time, but when his hand obstructs and impedes you; but that there you should come with your Free-will offerings, and do your Duty & Homage to him, as he commanded you. Believe it, this is a matter of great moment, and not to be slighted or disregarded by you. •

Sixthly: *You must walk with God in Church-fellowship, in Sincerity, and with Uprightness of heart to.* Without this, all your performances are in vain. The Lord Jesus is very curious and critical in searching your hearts in your Church-state, *Rev.* 2. 23. *And all the Churches shall know that I search the reins and the heart.* And in *Jer.* 17. 10. saith God to the inchurched Jews, *I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins.* Then surely it must very much concern you to see, that you draw nigh to God (continually) with true hearts, *Heb.* 10. 22. and that without all allowed Guile and Hypocrisie. *A little of this Leaven will quickly leaven the whole lump of duties,* *Gal.* 5. 9. It will so corrupt and sowre them, as that they will be all stark naught, and good for nothing, but to kindle and encrease the flames of God's Wrath and Vengeance against you. Therefore take heed and beware of Hypocrisie, and do not connive or wink at the least grain of
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it in your hearts or duties, but be sure to walk with God in the performance of all duties, in Integrity and Uprightness: Be sure, that your God expects it from you, and requires it of you, *Joshua* 24. 14. *Gen.* 17. 1. *The Eyes of the Lord run to and fro through-out the Churches, to see whose heart is perfect with him, and whose is hypocritical,* 2 *Chron.* 16. 9. *He requires Truth in the inward parts,* *Psal.* 51. 6. and that all Church-members should walk before him in Truth, and with perfect hearts, 2 *King.* 20. 3. You must worship God, and serve him with your *all*, for your little all is but too little for him, *Prov.* 23. 26. *Math.* 22. 37. *Psal.* 119. 10. You must not leave one hoof behind, when you do any thing for God, nor put God off with a part of your abilities for the whole; for if you do, you will lose the acceptance and reward of all: *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy Name* (saith David) *Psal.* 103. 1.

Seventhly: See that you worship God, and observe all his Ordinances in the Church, *in spirit* or *spiritually*. Remember that you are his holy spiritual Temples, the Temples of the Holy Ghost, *Eph.* 2. 21. 1 *Cor.* 3. 16. that all the Ordinances of worship in them are holy and spiritual Ordinances stampt with the Image of God's Holiness and Authority; and that *he will be worshipped in spirit*, or *spiritually*, *Job.* 4. 23, 24. You must be very careful that you take not up with the external part and outside of your duties and priviledges, that you settle not your selves and stay (as it were) in, and upon Ordinances, and your enjoying and observing them;

them ; but get *within the Vail*, seek and look for God and Christ, for Heaven and glorious things in them. Let your Faith conduct you by the hand of the Spirit into the bosom and heart of Christ, that there you may read his Love, Grace, and glorious Excellencies, have intimate and close Communion with him, and be ravished and refreshed with his Person and Love. Get into his *Galleries*, and see the King of Glory in his beautys and transcendant sweetnesses, and get into the *Sanctum Sanctorum*, into the most holy place ; for the way is opened, and the vail drawn off and removed by your Head, for you to come and meet him there, *Heb. 10. 19, 20* Therefore do not stand and worship in the outer Court of the Temple, but go and pass through Ordinances to Christ *into the holiest of all* ; and when-ever you go and enter in, be you sure that you carry all Graces & the Spirit with you, to meet your Lord, and honour him with them. Endeavour all you can to see and feel him, to get your hearts ravished with his Person and Love, that thereby they may be raised up to great delight, joy, chearfulness, adoration, admiration and praise, that they may be filled with his Savours, warmed with his Love, drawn by his Beauty . be (by all) knit and united, tyed and bound fast to him. Then we worship him in spirit, or spiritually, when we worship him, & go to meet him with all our Graces in the Holy of Holies, & when our Hearts & Graces do close up with , and hold Communion with him in these *Beauties of Holiness*, *Psal. 110. 3*. I am affraid that very few Church-members are experimentally acquainted with this matter ;
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for if they were so acquainted with it indeed, they could not do as they do. They could not neglect the worship and Ordinances of Christ, nor cry up a *Cephas*, and cry down a *Paul*, as they do, 1 *Cor.* 3. They could not be so careless and formal in them as they are, nor carry about such dead, lumpish, and heavy hearts and minds as they do. Well, but however it hath been with you, let it be so no more: Do you for time to come learn so to worship God, as you have heard, that so you may please and honour him, and he may delight to meet with, and bless you.

Eightly: You must walk in Church-fellowship, *cheerfully, comfortably, and joyfully*. You must not be *Whiners* and *Complainers*; you must not be sad, lumpish, and melancholly in your Father's House: No, for that will greatly reflect on your Father, and on your Head and Husband. You will raise suspicions in the minds of men on the good ways of God, and in a sense you will contradict his Gospel, his Truth, and Faithfulness, his Love and Care to and over his Churches. For God hath promised to *make his People joyful in his House of Prayer*, Isa. 56. 7. *and to satisfy them with Bread*, Psal. 132. 15. But by the sad and heavy walkings of his People in his House, they declare that they are not satisfied, nor find such Provisions in his House as he promised, and they expected. Such sad, lumpish, and melancholly Church-members do greatly dishonour Christ and his good ways, offend their Brethren and scandalize the World. For when they see them walk so, what will they think and say of the waies and Ordinances

nances of God? will they not falsely accuse and condemn them, despise and loath them, yea and harden their hearts against Religion it self? or else they will judge and censure such for Hypocrites and Dissemblers. We ought to commend Religion and the good wayes of God, wherein we walk, to the Conviction and Acceptance of all that behold us: and that in one thing or way, as well as another. We should walk with a holy, serious, chearfulness, and pleasantness, and be joyful, chearful and pleasant before and towards all men; and that for Christ's, Religion's, our own and others sakes; that by this carriage we may honour God, commend his Gospel-Religion, and holy wayes; his easy, sweet and pleasant yoke and wayes: *Matth. 11. ult. Prov. 3. 17.* encourage and strengthen the hearts and hands of our Brethren; and convince the world of the Goodness, Pleasantness and Profit of them, and perswade them to fall in love with and imbrace them. You must so walk also, because God hath inchurched you, and put you under his Ordinances, and promised to make you joyful, pleasant and chearful: yea he charges and commands you to be and do so, *Phil. 3. 1. Phil. 4. 4. Psal. 32. ult.* Remember, and lay to heart, how many Causes & Objects you have to make you chearful, pleasant and joyful. Therefore make use of them, for the enabling you to walk joyfully.

Quest. *What are the Evils, Sins and Temptations, that Church-members are Subject to? pray shew us them, that we may know and avoid them.*

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Ans. Church-members are subject or lyable to many Evils, Sins and Temptations in their Church-state. For Believers being formed up together in one body, profess to be one, and to be entirely concerned and included with and in one another, & so are said to be *one Lump*; Gal. 5. 9. and one House or Temple. The Devil doth set on them the more furiously, and with greater strength and diligence, that so he may wound and mischief many with his fiery Darts together, and kill a whole Church by stabbing one or two Members thereof. For he knows that if he can tempt one to sin openly and scandalously, he may thereby reproach the whole body, and put them to grief and shame. For a little *Leaven, leavens the whole Lump*; 1 Cor. 5. 6. Gal. 5. 9. Therefore, I say, he will be more busy with Church-members, than with others in this matter: which should greatly provoke them to arm the more carefully, watch the more diligently, and fight the more manfully, that they be not deluded and conquered by him, to the grief and shame of their Fellow-members. It is true, that Church-members have more helps and advantages against Sin and Temptation, than others have, as I have elsewhere shewed; and it is as true, that they shall be mostly assaulted and tryed; and yet (if they will) they are and will be on the advantage-ground against all these Evils: as they will find by experience, if they will mind their duty; I will name a few of the Evils they will be tempted to.

1. To take up and entertain *evil Surmises of one another*, 2 Cor. 12. 1 Tim. 6. 4. They will be

be greatly tempted to keep groundless Jealousies and Suspicious one of another, which tends and leads to

2. *Harsh and severe Censurings, and uncharitable Judgings one of another*, which is a most hateful sin in the sight of God, and which is expressly forbidden and condemned, *Matth. 7. 1. 2. Rom. 14. 10, 13.*

3. They will be tempted to *Envy* one another, which is one of the devilish sins so often mentioned and condemned in the Scripture, and frequently forbidden, *Gal. 5. ult. 2 Cor. 12. 20. 1 Pet. 1. 1.* They will be tempted to be envious at that in their Brethren, for which they ought to thank God and rejoyce, *Rom. 12. 15.* They must not envy the prosperity of the wicked, much less that of their Brethren, *Psal. 37. 1.* Enviyers eyes are evil, because God is good, *Matth. 20. 15. Luk. 15. 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30.* here you have the Pourtraiture and express Image of Envy, and of an envious Person, what draws it forth, or what is the Object of their Envy.

4. They will be tempted to be *proud and lifted up* with their Church-state, with the Priviledges and Dignity thereof : to think highly of themselves, & vilely of others, *Rom. 12. 3. Phil. 2. 3.* They are very subject to be lifted up with their Gifts and Attainments, and to affect vain-glory, as *Paul* speaks ; *Gal. 5. ult.* and to be too great in their own eyes : which is a most hateful and pernicious Evil.

5. They will be tempted to *Wrath, Strife, and Schisms* ; to cause and raise Divisions, Debates, Contentions and Disputings : which is a real

fruit of Pride, *Prov.* 13. 10. *1 Tim.* 6. 4. 5. and very pernicious to the glory, welfare and comfort of the Church. And although this Evil be expressly forbidden and greatly condemned, yet many Church-members can too boldly and confidently practise it, and pretend that they have reason or cause so to do : yea, and that they do well in it. But take heed and beware of it : and let such know, that it is a most hateful and devilish Sin, and a most infectious Plague-fore, that will destroy the Authours and Practisers of it, if not timely repented of.

6. They will be tempted to *Formality*, and taking up with the form of Godliness without the power thereof, *2 Tim.* 3. 5. To take up with, and settle themselves on the Lees of Ordinances and external Duties and Enjoyments, with the neglect of the Heart, Soul, Life and Power of them; and heart-warming, heart-sanctifying, and heart-teaching Communion with God. Oh! how many Church-members are there, who do indulge themselves, comply with the natural Genius of their own hearts, and joyn issues with Satan in this matter? who eye not, nor look mostly unto the Spirit, Christ, Grace and good of the means they use; nor bring their hearts and graces to God in them; but rest and satisfy themselves with a cold, sapless, and lifeless form, or out-side of Religion; and therefore they do not, cannot thrive and prosper : but they wither and decay within, while they are in the Courts of God.

7. They will be tempted to the great sin and evil, of *Reproaching and Back-biting one another* : to vilifie, defame and speak evil one of

another, and blast each others good Names and Reputations. This is another mischievous and abominable Sin, which is found too rife and rampant amongst them. It is a most pernicious Evil and prejudicial to Christ himself, his Gospel, People, Wayes and Interests; and therefore Satan will strive the more industriously to provoke them to do it; and therefore we should be the more watchful against it; 2. Car. 12. 20. Jam. 4. 11. Tit. 3. 2. Eph. 4. 31. 1 Pet. 2. 1. God abhors this Tongue-sin, this poysonous Sword, and good-name-Murthe-ring Abomination: he cannot bear to hear his Church-members to be *biting and devouring one another*, Gal. 5. 15. yet are they prone and oftentempted to it.

8. They will be tempted to *slight, undervalue*; yea, and to *despise one another*; especially, such as are poor and weak; they will be tempted to slight and disesteem such as are high and honourable in God's account, and such as he greatly values and esteems. But take heed and beware of it; for it is a most God-provoking sin. They are glorious in Gods thoughts, let them not be base in yours. Their names are pretious in Heaven, and let them be pretious to you.

9. They will be tempted to *slight and undervalue their priviledges, and to disregard their works and duties in the Church*. At first they are much taken and affected with them, but after a while they do as much slight and disesteem them; neglect and disregard them: and then they fall to omitting and neglecting them. These are dear-bought priviledges and duties,

and therefore ought to be highly accounted of and esteemed.

10. And then it follows, that they will quarrel with their Teachers, or be much offended at them; slight and disesteem them, and be full of objections against them and their works. But you must take heed and beware of this evil likewise; for when you have forsaken God, and he hath left you, then you are tempted to dislike your Teachers, but never till then. They are Christ's *Embassadors, Jewels and Instruments of his glory*, in the Churches and in the World, and they are near and dear to him: and therefore your sin will be very great in slighting and disesteeming them.

12. They will be tempted to *leave communion with the Church*, and ramble about from place to place, which is a dangerous and pernicious evil, and tends directly to the breaking of the Churches, and destruction of all Church-order. Many love to change their Place, Works and Company; and seem to be better every, or any where, than in their own Place and Work.

13. They will be tempted to *neglect their Church-duties one to another*, and live as persons alone, without having regard of, or respect unto one another as Brethren and Members of the same household. And when they have entertained the Temptation into their minds, they will easily dispense with total Omissions, and not be troubled at it, nor care what becomes of one another.

14. They will be tempted to *draw nigh to God in Church-Ordinances, with worldly, vain and unprepared hearts*. The Commonness of them, and their

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their frequent use of them, together with the untunedness of their hearts, make them common things and matters to them; so as that they dare adventure on them with common frames of heart, which once they durst not do; But now they can dispense with it, as with some light matter.

15. They will be tempted *to receive pernicious Doctrines*, and to entertain evil Opinions, in, and about Religion. Many Church-members have been caught in these Nets, and taken in these Snares: not because they were such, but because they walked not warily and circumspectly in that state and relation. For by being Church-members, they have had great advantages against them, and means to prevent their being ensnared, but that they improved them not, as they might have done, for their own security. They were not aware of him, who goes up and down in the Kingdom to sow his Tares.

16. They will be tempted, when they have sucked in any poysonous Doctrines, and entertained erroneous Opinions, *to help the Devil in sowing them in the minds of others*, and endeavour to leaven them with their new Leaven also. For being deluded and seduced themselves, it is almost natural to them to seduce others likewise; as experience testifies.

17. They will be tempted *to prejudice and injure each others Souls, in their occasional Visits*, by entertaining one another with vain, frothy and heart-deadning Discourses, instead of heart-bettering Discourses. They will be tempted to tempt one another to give and receive such mat-

ter, as tends to the subverting and corrupting of each others Souls, drawing them away from God, and indisposing them for their duties, rather than to edification and profit. And this is a most pernicious Evil, though little minded and considered: and it is an Evil that is much practised and countenanced amongst Church-members. For they that have such opportunities, which they ought to improve for the better and not for the worse, are found improving them by their Tongues and Ears for the worse and not for the better, which will cost them very dear hereafter. Such carnal and vain Communications, as are frequently found among them, corrupt good Hearts, and Manners also.

18. They will be tempted to be ungrateful to God for his mercies to them, and to account their duty and priviledges, their heavy Yoke & Burdens, as the Israelites did their Deliverance from their Bondage in Egypt. They were displeased with God and Moses for bringing them out of their house of Bondage, and it is to be feared that some Church-members now are displeased, because they are brought into the House of God: and they say in their hearts would God we had been wiser, than to have joyned our selves to the Churches; as the Israelites said, would God that we had dyed in Egypt. Take heed of this evil. We are so encumbered with Meetings, and Disbursements, and with one thing and another, as that our condition is, burdensome unto us, is the language of some, as I have ground to think.

19. They will be tempted to slacken their Zeal, care and diligence, to grow in grace and perfect holiness, and to look after their gettings in the

the Churches and Ordinances of Christ. So that they will grow lukewarm, careless and indifferent, what becomes of their Souls: whether they thrive and prosper, or whether they do wither and decay: whether they partake of the fatness of God's house or no.

20. They will be tempted to *make carnal Advantages to themselves, of their Church-state*, and to aim at, and prosecute worldly Ends therein, more than spiritual, and to subordinate and make use of their work and duty there, to promote and serve a base worldly Interest.

21. They will be tempted to *desert their duty, and relinquish their Station and Privileges in a trying time*; and to conform to the world, for filthy Lucre's sake, and to enjoy their outward Peace and Liberty. Many seem to be strong and well settled in their faith, principles and practise before the Tempest blows in their faces; but when the Wind and Waves beat against them, they appear other kind of men. Therefore, *let him that standeth in a calm day, take heed that he fall not in a stormy night.* These are some of the Evils and Sins, that you will be tempted to in your Church-state. Therefore consider them, and make sufficient and seasonable provisions against them: lest they take you unawares, and overthrow you.

Obj. But some may say, if all these Evils and Dangers attend Church-members, then it is better for us to keep out of it, and not be Church-members, that we may avoid them, and not expose ourselves to Sin and Temptation therein.

Ans. That such Temptations will attend Church-members, is certain; but that therefore

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Believers should keep out of a Church-state, that I deny. For 1. It is your indispensable duty, (as you have heard) to walk in Church-fellowship; and therefore you must do so: and it being your duty, you may be sure it is the safest and the most secure way for you, to keep you from Sin and prevalent Temptations to it. For the way of our duty, is ever the surest and safest way, as we all know.

2. What I have said in this matter, is *cautionary*; not to affright any from their duty and priviledges; but to quicken and provoke Church-members to the more wise, watchful and exact walkings; to more Diligence and Faithfulness, in making provisions against them, that they may be ready armed and fenced against them, to resist and conquer them.

3. Although you may be more tempted to sin in a Church-state, yet you may sin less therein than out of it. For you have heard already, that a true Church of Christ is invested with many priviledges and advantages against Sin, and Temptations to it: which if well used and improved by you, they will sufficiently defend you, and ballance all the weights that may be put into the ballance of Temptations, and abundantly store you with provisions against them, were they a thousand times as many more. For you have heard, that in a Church there is more of Christ, and of his Spirit and Grace for Believers, than out of such a State and Relation. And therefore it is much better and safer being there, and walking with God therein, than to be elsewhere. Wherefore let all Church-members see that they

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walk circumspectly, or (*ἀκριβῶς*) exactly, cautiously and accurately, Eph. 5. 15. in their Church-state and Relation. Mind and practise what you see (before) you are bound to do; and take heed that you so walk and demean your selves towards God, Men and your own Souls; that you carefully watch against and avoid all the aforesaid Evils, and the Temptations that lead you to them. And to move and quicken you so to do, be pleased to consider and lay to heart these few Considerations,

1. That in a Church-state you have *many observers*. There are *many eyes on you*, and many that watch for your halting: The world knows that you have separated from them upon the account of holiness, and that by grace you are made better than they. They know that you pretend to singular things, and that you profess to be called out of the World, and from sin to holiness and singular Righteousness, and that you left Communion with them on a Religious account. They understand that you pretend to more light and knowledge, to more communion with God, and to greater attainments and enjoyments than they do: and therefore expect to see better things from you, than from themselves, and such as they are. They will tell you, *that to whom much is given, of them much is required*, and that you are in your profession, some of them. They will tell you, that they can no otherwise judge of you, than by your fruits, and if they be not suitable to your profession and pretences, they will think you are but Hypocrites and painted Sepulchres. Be sure that you have many, that mind and strictly observe all your steps.

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2. Your Lord and King expects singular and peculiar frames of hearts, words & deeds from you. He narrowly marks your steps; and observes your walkings, how you carry your selves towards one another, how you walk towards and before all men, and what your frames and Deportments are towards himself. For his eyes behold, and his eye-lids try the Children of men. Psal. 11. 4. You know, and he tells you, that he hath done great and special things for you; that he hath been at great expence of blood and treasure on you; and all to make you a peculiar People unto himself. Tit. 2. 14. He hath honoured and exalted you, and brought you nigh unto himself; and entrusted you with great Talents: He hath set you on high, and magnified you exceedingly in the sight of all sorts of men; and hath made you his golden Candlesticks, Rev. 2. 1. and his living Witnesses; and therefore he may well expect and require special carriages; and singular fruits from you. Oh! then do not disappoint him of his so reasonable expectations; but let the Lord Jesus see in you the fruits of his labour and toyl, of his cost and charge, and of his blood and travel. Let him find you good Stewards of his house, and household-affairs, and meet to be trusted with more of his Treasures.

3. Consider, that your Brethren and Fellow-members, and especially, your Teachers and Overseers, do expect such walkings, fruits and carriages from you. Your Teachers expect it, earnestly desire it, pray for it, and labour to make you such. Your Fellow-members they also look for it, pray for it, and earnestly desire it.

it : I mean such of them as are holy spiritual persons. They, especially your *Teachers*, do long; and are in travail for it; and they greatly rejoyce (indeed) to see you a holy, humble, wise, zealous, meek, diligent, faithful, loving, and a fruit-bearing people. They are exceedingly troubled to see their labour to be in vain with, and to you : Your non-proficiency, cold, worldly, and carnal walkings; your barrenness and unprofitableness; your want of love to God, your own souls, and to one another are great, very great, and heart-breaking afflictions to them. They mourn for, and are grieved at you, and your ways; because you are not so serious, holy, exact, spiritual, zealous, loving, sweet, meek humble, useful, wise, diligent and heavenly, as you might be, and your Church-state, priviledges, enjoyments, and high professions call for, and greatly oblige you to.

4. Consider, *that your own souls are greatly concerned in these things* : If you walk in these ways, practise the aforesaid duties, to observe these said Ordinances of divine worship, and carefully watch against, and avoyd the said evils and temptations to sin, that your souls and bodys will reap the benefit and profit of all. You will have the peace, joy, satisfaction, sweetness, and consolation of your so doing. But if on the contrary, you be found negligent and careless of the holy will of God, and your duties, and disobedient unto his holy Laws : If you slight and undervalue your great and invaluable priviledges and enjoyments, and make not spiritual earnings of them, but remain dead, cold, barren, and unfruitful under them; connive at,
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and indulge any of the said Sins, or others like them, and dally with Temptations; you will certainly rue for it, and pull on your heads and hearts many evils, troubles, sorrows, and disquietments; many fears and distresses, incumbrances and confusions. You will drive God from you, cause him to shut up his loving Countenance from you in displeasure, and to write bitter things against you. Your own souls are very much concerned in your exact, holy, diligent, faithful, and circumspect walking with God in all his ways and Gospel-precepts in your Church-state. Therefore do you aim at, and seek their good, and do you so walk and carry your selves towards God and one another as to promote their happiness.

5. Consider, *call to mind, and lay to heart the ends for which you joyned your selves to the Churches of Christ, as also the solemn profession and engagement you then made to, and before God, Angels and Men.* Remember, that they are all Witnesses for you, to what you did, when you entred in among them, and took on you the serious, diligent, faithful, and constant observation of all the Laws and Ordinances of Jesus Christ in them, when you took hold of his Covenant, owned the Lord Christ for your Head, King, and Law-giver, and promised to yield him all faithful subjection and obedience. For if you forget these things, neglect your duties, or walk contrary unto God; know for certain that he will remember all, and will testifie against you; yea, he will make your own Consciences Witnesses against you. Oh consider! did you not joyn in Church-fellowship, that you might
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be enriched with Grace, be filled with the Spirit, built up in Gospel-holiness, and that you might perfect holiness in the fear of God, 2 Cor. 7. 1. Ask your Hearts and Consciences, did we not joyn our selves together in a holy band, and bind our selves to walk with God into all well-pleasing, in our Church-state and Gospel-relation one to another? surely we did. Well then, do we now (indeed) keep these things warm on our hearts, aim at, and prosecute them in good earnest, or do we not? Did we not aim at, intend, and engage to get more Acquaintance and Communion with Christ, & more Acquaintance with our selves, and with the Laws, Waies and Promises of Jesus Christ? and did we not intend and promise to obey him, wait on him, honour and glorifie him in and by our so doing? Did we not intend and aim at the profit of our own souls, the good of one another, and of all men, and that we might be made fruitful in every good work? Col. 1. 10. Heb. 13. 21. That Lusts might be mortified, Sin subdued, Grace magnified, and our Hearts cleansed and purified?

6. Consider and lay to heart the many and great encouragements you have to further you, to strengthen your hands and animate your hearts to your duty, and so walking in your Church-fellowship. You have very many helps and inducement to encourage and quicken you so to do. Some are past, some are present in your hands, and some are yet to come. O remember, how great things the Lord hath done for you, that you might be his People, and walk as you have heard. When you were accursed and

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condemned to everlasting Destruction, *2 Thes. 1*. He redeemed you, He gave himself a *Ransom* for you, took on him your sins and punishment, your work and shame; your wrath and reproach, to take off the Sentence that was past on you, remove the Curse from you, and bring you out of Prison from the bondages in which you were, *Isa. 5. 3. 2 Cor. 5. ult. Zach. 9. 11*. He became your *Surety*, took on him your Debts, was arrested and cast into *Prison*, *Isa. 53*. and paid the utmost farthing for you, and thereby obtained a general Release for you. He found you in your *blood*, and then he *washed* you, *Ezek. 16*. and he found you miserable, and pitied you; He found you naked, and cloathed you; dead, and quickened you; sick, and he healed you. He found you blind, and he enlightened you; fallen, and he lifted you up. You were weak, and he strengthened you; in pain, and he eased you; sorrowful, and he comforted you: When you were wandering out of the way of peace and happiness, he sought you out, and brought you back unto himself; he set your feet in the right way, and spake peace unto you. Ever since you were new-born, he hath succoured, supported, supplied, and cared for you. He hath entrusted and enriched you with Gospel-mercies for your maintenance and comfortable subsistence. You have had, and still have many of his choise Talents in your hand, and he never denied you any good thing. But this is not all that you have to encourage you in the practise of holiness; but you have many of his Bonds in your hands for your security, of what he will further be to you, and do

for you. You have many Earnests, Pawns, and Pledges of greater things that he will yet do for you. He hath engaged to you, that he will abide with you, and that he will never wholly leave or forsake you, Joh. 14. 21. 23. Heb. 13. 5. That he will care for, and water you, protect, exalt, and honour you, Isa. 27. 3. Psal. 37. 34. and make you perfectly holy. That he will supply all your wants, Phil. 4. 19. guide you by his Spirit, fill you full of joy and peace by believing; perfect the Marriage-Union, come again and receive you to himself, and instate you in eternal Glory.

CHAP. XII.

Of the Lords Supper, wherein several questions are answered concerning the nature, use, and end of it, and the necessary qualifications and preparations of all worthy Receivers of it; with several other things relating to the Lords Supper.

I Shall now give you a brief account of the Lords Supper, commonly called the Sacrament of the Lords Supper, by Learned Men; but I shall call it as the Gospel doth, the Lords Supper, 1 Cor. 11. 20. and breaking of Bread Luk. 24. 35. Acts 2. 42. Acts 20. 7. This holy and spiritual Ordinance, this great Seal of the Covenant, the Lord Jesus hath appointed for, and given to his Gospel Churches for their souls profit, and the manifestation of the glory of his Love and Grace to them.

Quest. What is the Lords Supper?

Ans. It is a Heavenly Feast, or a spiritual Gospel-Ordinance, instituted and appointed by Je-

Jesus Christ for, and given to his inchurched Saints, to be to them a constant Memorial, Sign, and Seal of his death and sufferings for them. (1.) It is a Feast, yea, it is a Feast of fat things, Isa. 25. 6. and a Heavenly Banquet, Cant. 2. 4. It is the Spiritual Wedding-Supper, made & appointed by Jesus Christ for his Spouses; where he comes, furnishes the Table, sits down and eats with them; invites them to sit down with him, and bids them welcome; bids them eat and drink abundantly, Rev. 3. 20. Cant. 5. 1. (2) It is a Spiritual Gospel-Ordinance, not a Civil, or a Carnal and Legal Ordinance such as were ordained for the Jewish Church of old; but it is a Spiritual Gospel-Ordinance, for, and respecting spiritual things. (3.) The Institutor of it, and that is Jesus Christ, him to whom the Father had committed all power and Authority, and into whose hand he had given all things, Joh. 3. 35. Matth. 11. 27. Matth. 28. 18. I say, it is an Ordinance instituted by Jesus Christ himself, Matth. 26. 26, 27. 1 Cor. 11. 23. For I received of the Lord that, which also I delivered unto you; that the Lord Jesus, the same Night in which he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat, this is my body, which is broken for you; this do ye in remembrance of me. And mark it, it is an instituted and a positive Ordinance and duty, not a natural or moral one. It is not founded on, or put in, and among the moral precepts, or natural Laws of God; but it is meerly an Institution of Christ, appointed for, and given to his inchurched members, and none else. And therefore, it is not an Ordinance for, and the use of it

it, a duty incumbent on Unbelievers, and persons dead in sins, while they remain in that condition ; but 'tis only appointed and intended for Believers in their orderly walkings with God. All men, as they are reasonable Creatures, are bound to pray to God, and to hear his Word preached, because they are (though not meerly and only so) Ordinances and duties of moral worship, and not meerly of divine Institution, as Baptism and the Lords Supper are ; but all men are not so bound to participate of the Lords Supper and water Baptism. (4.) It is said, that this Ordinance is appointed for, and given to inchurched Saints , that is, that persons in Christ, may, and they only can partake of it in the way and order of the Gospel. For although their relation to Christ, and interest in the Covenant of Grace, gives them a fundamental right unto it, yet it is their orderly walking together in Church-fellowship under the discipline of Christ, the care, inspection, and government of his Church-Ministers, that gives them an immediate and orderly right unto it. For we never read of any of the Apostles, or other Ministers in their days, that did, or were allowed to receive it, but such as were inchurched. That it was by the Apostles direction administred and received in the Churches we often find, but never that it was so else-where, or by Believers out of a Church-state, *Acts* 2. 42. ult. *Acts* 20. 6, 7. *1 Cor.* 11. 23, 24. compared with *1 Cor.* 1, 2. And *Paul* tells the Church at *Corinth*, *That the Cup of Blessing, which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ ? the Bread, that we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of*

Christ? For we being many are one Bread and one Body; for we are all partakers of that one Bread, 1 Cor. 10. 16, 17. (5.) The Matter of this Ordinance is *Bread and Wine*, Luk. 22. 19. Matth. 26. 26. 1 Cor. 11. 23, 24. Mark. 14. 25. Matth. 26. 29. It is true that it is but carnal matter, and that which is common food among men; but it is more than Bread and Wine by Christ's Authority and Appointment, when they are set apart by the word of Prayer, and by Faith dedicated and sanctified to this use and service, in the name, and by the Authority of Jesus Christ.

Quest. *Why is this Ordinance called the Lords Supper*, 1 Cor. 10. 20?

Ans. 1. It is called a Supper, because it was instituted, and celebrated at, or about Supper-time. The Lord Jesus chose that time rather than another, as of his Sovereign Authority, will and pleasure, who may make, appoint, and change times and seasons as he will; so likewise with respect to the *Paschal Lamb*, or the Pass-over, and the time of the *Israelites* eating thereof, which was done in the Night, *Exod.* 12. 8. and also that he might abolish and put an end to that Ordinance at that time of its observation, by setting this up in the place and room thereof.

2. It is called the Lords Supper, 1. Because he did personally and immediately institute it, administer and eat it himself, *Matth.* 26. 26. 27. 29. (2.) Because it is appointed and ordained by him, to be a constant memorial & pledge of his Death and Sufferings, *Luk.* 22. 20. But more of this anon. (3.) Because it is to be received and celebrated in his Name, and to his Glory, 1 Cor. 11. 26. We read of several things called

called by his Name ; as *his Day*, or the Christian Sabbath, *Rev.* 1. 10. The *Laws* and *Commands* of Christ are so called, *Joh.* 15. 10. So likewise we read of the *Table and Cup of the Lord*, 1 *Cor.* 10. 21. So are the Churches and the Teachers of them called by his Name for the reasons before mentioned.

Quest. *What is the nature, use, and end of the Lords Supper, or wherefore is it instituted and given to inchurched Saints, as it appears it is?*

Ans. I shall answer this question in many particulars, only in the general I may say, that it is instituted, ordained, and given to the Churches for Christs glory and their spiritual profit.

1. But more particularly: 1. *To be to them a constant sign and memorial of Christs Death and Sufferings for them.* We are exceeding prone and very apt to forget the Love of Christ, and what he hath done and suffered for us, which should be matter of shame and sorrow to us. But the Lord Jesus in his great love and care to, and of his Churches, hath provided proper Remedies for these Maladies, and hath appointed his Gospel, and the Preaching thereof, and also Baptism and the Supper, to keep alive in their minds and hearts his Death and Sufferings, and to be continual signs, tokens, and memorials of them unto their Souls, *Rom.* 4. 11. *Luk.* 22. 19. 1 *Cor.* 11. 24, 25, 26. And as God told Noah, *Gen.* 9. 11. -- 17. *This is the Token of the Covenant which I have made between me and you. I do set my Bow in the Cloud, and it shall be for a Token of the Covenant.* So says Jesus Christ, I have entered into Covenant with God in your behalf, and in your names, to dye and suffer the shame,

ful Death of the Cross for you, to redeem you from all Iniquity, Tit. 2. 14. to wash and cleanse you from the guilt and filth of sin, to reconcile you unto God, and make you acceptable to him, Eph. 5. 25, 26. 2 Cor. 5. 18, 19. Eph. 1. This I have done for you; I took your sins and guilt, your death and punishment on my self, by assuming your Nature, and substituting my self in your stead; and I have paid your Debts, made you Righteousness, 2 Cor. 5. ult. & have brought you nigh to God by the Sacrifice of my Life: And you may not forget it, but have it still in your eyes and hearts. Behold, I have given you this sign, token, and memorial thereof. Here you shall see by Faith your great high Priest sacrificing and offering up himself, to atone divine Justice, to appease the wrath of God; and here you may see how I was handled by God and Men for you. Here you may see how I was Tortured, Reproached, Buffeted, Scourged, Crowned with Thorns, Spit upon, Hanged, Nailed and Crucified. Here you may see by Faith, my Blood gushing out, my Groans, Sighs, and Tears, my Agonies and bloody Sweats, and my soul made an Offering for your Sins. Here you may see what a horrible and an exceeding great evil, Sin is; how infinitely God hates it: And here you may see my Travels and Torments, my Griefs & unexpressible Sorrows for you. I Dyed that you might Live: I was made a Curse, that you might be for ever blessed; and I was put to Shame, that you might be honoured. I was made a Man of Sorrows, that you might rejoyce; and I was punished that you might be released. I was de-
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based that you might be exalted; and I was scourged that you might be crowned. I was condemned that you might be justified; and I was slain that you might be saved. In this Ordinance you may see a Righteous Man dying, and yet under more guilt and punishment than ever man was; & here you may see a holy man dying as a great, yea, the greatest of Sinners. Here you may, as in a glass, behold one put to the worst of Deaths for Sin, and yet never sinned; and here you may see the Lord of Glory murdered by the hands of wicked men. In this Ordinance you may see by Faith, as in a glass, amazing and astonishing wonders; the offended Person the Sufferer, and the Offender set free. The *Innocent* Surety taken and cast into Prison, and the *Nicent* released and set at liberty. In a word, here you may see the *Prison doors* set open for *Prisoners* to come forth freely, *Isa. 61. 1, 2.* and here you may see all Debts discharged. Here you may see Divine Justice satisfied, and God reconciled, *Isa. 53.* And here you may see sins pardoned, and the Book crossed: Here you may see the fountain of eternal Love opened to Sinners, and God well pleased; and here you may hear God saying, *Deliver them, for I have found a Ransom.* Here you may see Truth and Mercy, Justice and free Grace meet in that one Glorious Mediatour; and here you may see God and Men in perfect peace and friendship. Here you may see the everlasting Love of God streaming forth to you, and here you may see the Grace of Christ flowing out to you. Here you have a Token, Sign, and Memorial of it before your eyes, that you may look on these

things with great delight, with joy and re-joycing, and with admiration and thanksgiving. Here you will read heart-ravishing matters, and here you may see adorable objects. This Ordinance sets forth the Love of God, the Misery of Man, the Grace of Christ, and a Crucified Jesus to the life. In it you may be even swallowed and lost, for it holds out to you heights, depths, breadths and lengths of infinite, free, and adorable Love and Grace.

2. The Lords Supper is a *seal and pledge* to inchurched Believers also. It is not appointed for, and given to them, to be a sign, token, and memorial of God's Love, and of the Grace and Death of Christ only; but to be a seal and pledge to them too. So the Apostle *Paul* tells us, that the Ordinance of Circumcision was a *Seal of the Righteousness of Faith*, that is of Christ, the great object of Faith, *Rom. 4. 11.* Circumcision and the Passover were the *Israelites* Seals; and Baptisme and the Lords Supper are the believing Gentiles Seals. Seals are appointed and made use of among men to ratifie and confirm their Contracts, Covenants and Promises to men, whereby they are made firm and irreversibile. Now the great God, in allusion to the practises of men, is pleased in his abundant Grace and Mercy, not only to covenant and promise his greatest mercies to men, but for their satisfaction and encouragement, to seal them, and thereby to ratifie and confirm them. He need not to have done so upon his own account, but he doth it only for our sakes. Now I judge the Lords Supper Seals thus. (1.) First to the truth and reality of the Covenant,

nant, and to the Blood of it, namely, Christ's, which is called *the Blood of the everlasting Covenant*, Heb. 13. 20. and (2.) To the Faith and Consciences of particular Saints. That is, it seals to them their right unto, and interest in the Covenant of Grace, the Blood of Christ, and to all the benefits of his mediation and mercies of the Covenant. But the first thing or matter it seals to, is the truth and reality of the Covenant on God's part, if I may so express it. It pleased God to determinate and chuse to save men by Covenant, or in a Covenant-way. And this good pleasure of his took place in the bosom of his eternal Counsels before all time; which Covenant of Grace was made with Jesus Christ in Eternity, *Tit. 1. 2. 2 Tim. 1. 9. Prov. 8. Eph. 1. 4.* but was made manifest in time unto men, *2 Tim. 1. 10.* To them he gave Copies and Transcripts of it; at first to Adam in Paradise, *Gen. 3. 17.* and afterwards to Noah, Abraham, and others, until the promised Seed came, when the whole of it was opened and unfolded. In this Covenant God promised to give his Son Jesus Christ to and for men, *Isa. 42. 1. 6.* to make his Soul an offering for sin, that he should see his Seed, and of the travail of his Soul, and that the pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his hand, *Isa. 53. 10, 11.* And the Lord Jesus he engaged to come and fulfil all the will of his Father for them that were given to him. For so David and Paul bring him in speaking of himself in *Psal. 40. 6, 7, 8. Heb. 10. 6, 7, 8, 9.* In Burnt-offerings and Sacrifices for sin thou hadst no pleasure; then said I, Lo, I come to do thy Will. O God; and a Body hast thou prepared me, &c.

David

David spake of him as to come, but *Paul* as already come, and all in pursuance of the old Contract and Agreement in Heaven; but I cannot enlarge on this. But I say that Christ came, and did the Will of his Father by virtue of the eternal Covenant between the Father and Him, as I could shew at large, had I room and time to do it. Hence he tells us by *Solomon*, in *Prov.* 8. that his delights were with the Sons of men from the beginning: That he came down from Heaven to do the Will of him that sent him: *Joh.* 6. 38. That he kept his Fathers Commandments: *Joh.* 15. 10. That He finished the work the Father gave him to do, *Joh.* 17. 4. And appeals to his Father in the case, yea, to his Righteousness, and demands of him his promised Reward, *Joh.* 17. 4, 5, 24. God the Father promises to be well pleased with him and his Offerings, and in him with those he mediated for: That they should be pardoned, healed, justified, washed and sanctified; and that they should be accepted: *Eph.* 1. 6. That if Christ would be made sin for them, they should be made Righteousness of God in him, *2 Cor.* 5. ult. Now that God and the Mediatour have so Covenanted, promised, and engaged for, and in the behalf of Believers; that Christ came and finished all the work that the Father gave him to do; that Christ hath obeyed and suffered, the Father satisfied and well pleased; and that Peace, Friendship, and Reconciliation for men is obtained; and that God is faithful, who hath promised; *Heb.* 10. 23. and that he will not fail to perform the Truth to Jacob, and Mercy to Abraham, *Micah* 7. ult. is continued and ratified unto Believers, in and by

by the Lord's Supper. For there is held forth a clear proof and confirmation of it. *This is my body that is broken, and my blood that is shed or given,* 1 Cor. 11. 23, 24, 25. These are the first objects and matters our faith eyes and fixes on in the Lord's Supper; and these are the first things that it seals unto us; namely, that God hath covenanted and promised these mercies upon Christ's dying; that Christ hath dyed, done the Fathers whole will, and finished his work; and that God the Father hath accepted his Mediation in our behalf, justified his Son Jesus, and is well-pleased with him, and with us in him; that God is faithful who hath promised, and that he is able, and will perform his promises, made to Christ for, and given down to us. On these things our faith must fix; and then this Ordinance of the Supper will confirm them us.

2. As the Lord's Supper seals, or ratifies and confirms to our faith the truth, and reality of the Covenant and promises, the death of Christ, the faithfulness of God, and his being satisfied and well pleased with Christ's mediation for us, and that he will perform his Covenant and Promises unto the Heirs of promise: *so it seals, ratifies and confirms Believers interest and propriety in them.* It ratifies and confirms to their own Consciences, that they are interested in Christ: that they are Christs, and Christ is theirs: that they are regenerated and redeemed: that their sins are pardoned, and their persons accepted in the Beloved, Eph. 1. 6, 7. This Ordinance seals to them the fruits of Christ's death, and to the truth, sincerity and peculiarity of

of his grace in them : that they are united to him, and that he is their head, and they are his Members. That he loves them, and they love him, with special and peculiar love. This Ordinance seals to them their Adoption, and their right unto the eternal Inheritance : and it assures them (as a means of Christ's appointing for that end) that God is their Father, and they are his Children : that Christ is their Husband, and they are his Spouses; and that they shall live and reign with him in glory.

But yet know, that though there be a kind of a natural aptness in this holy Ordinance, thus to seal the love of God to you, as it is Christ's Ordinance, and instituted by him for this end : yet it cannot, doth not do it of, or by its self, or its own power ; *but it seals as an Ordinance in the hand of the spirit*, or as a fit medium and means, whereby and wherewith the holy spirit seals the Souls of Believers. It is the proper work of the holy Ghost to seal, ratifie and confirm his own work in Believers hearts, *Eph. 1. 13. Eph. 4. 30.* And this great work he doth, especially, in and by the Lord's Supper on the hearts of good men. For as the matters he seals to, are his own works in their hearts ; so he onely can confirm them to their Faith and Consciences. The love of God is said to be *shed abroad into our hearts by him*, *Rom. 5. 5.* and to this he sets his seal, and gives in his *Testimony*, *Rom. 8. 16.* namely, that he hath shed abroad the love of God in our hearts : that God loves us, & we love him with special love; and that he hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,
1 Pet.

1 Pet. 1. 2. He first writes his *Laves*, and creates his grace in our hearts, puts the Lord Jesus into the possession of them, forms faith, Repentance and all other graces of Christ in them; and then he seals, ratifies and confirms all to us, *Cant.* 8. 6, 2. *Cor.* 1. 22. *Job.* 33. 16. So that now we know, that we are passed from death to life, 1 *Joh.* 3. 14. and are sure that we are of God; that the Lord Jesus is ours, and we are his, *Cant.* 2. 16. And can say with *Thomas*, my Lord and my God; and with *David*, I am thine; and with *Paul* and others; if our earthly house be dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens, 2 *Cor.* 5. 1. Thus you see how this Ordinance seals up the love of God, and the work of his grace in our Souls: And therefore, when ever you receive it, be sure to look for, and expect it; and make use of it for, though not only for this end and purpose: And in order thereunto, be careful and diligent, in preparing and fitting your selves for the reception of this seal on your hearts; and then you need not doubt of your obtainment of it.

3. This Ordinance is instituted and given to churching Saints, to bring the Lord Jesus and them together, into the nearest, clearest, and closest fellowship and communion, that can be in this lower state. The Lord Jesus and they do greatly love one another, and delight in communion with each other, *Cant.* 4. ult. *Cant.* 5. 1. Believers in their holy, obediential and orderly walking are Christs dearly beloved Spouses, and he is their dearly beloved Husband, *Cant.* 2. 16. *Jer.* 12. 7. They do greatly love, and rejoyce in one anothers company and Society: their speeches are

are pleasant, and their countenances sweet and lovely to each other, *Zeph. 3. 17. Cant. 1. 4. Cant. 2. 7, 10, 13. Cant. 2. 14.* There is a holy fondness, and a heart-ravishing friendliness between Christ and his Beloved: they lye deep in each others hearts, and are so knit to one another in warm affections, as that they cannot patiently bear each others absence. Hence we find the Lord Jesus and his people inviting one another, and importunately solliciting each other to come to them: yea, and proffering themselves, and (as it were) inviting or pressing themselves upon, or into one anothers company, *Cant. 2. 10, 13, 14, 7. Cant. 4. 8. ult. Cant. 5. 1. Cant. 6. ult. Cant. 7. 11, 12. Rev. 3. 20. Joh. 14. 21, 23.*

Therefore hath glorious Jesus instituted Churches, and gathered up his people into spiritual households; formed them into holy Societies, and made them his walled Gardens. Therefore hath he brought them into a *holy Band*, knit them together into bodies, and given to them this *Feast of fat things*, this Pledge and Token of his distinguishing love, and this holy sign and seal; that he may invite and bring them together, to take, and eat; and that himself may come and be with them there. He is the matter, and the great master of the Feast, and he is the King that comes in, to see his Guests, and that bids them be merry, yea, and to eat and drink abundantly, (with an) *O Beloved!* *Cant. 5. 1.* In the *last verse* of the *4th chapter*, the Church importunately invites and sollicitates the Lord Jesus to come into his Garden, and eat his pleasant fruits; namely, when they were congre-

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gregated together, and waiting on and for him. The Lord Jesus comes, and tells them so, *Chap. 5. 1. I am come into my Garden my Sister, my Spouse, I have gathered my myrrh with my Spice: then* he chears them up, and bids them welcome, be merry, and eat and drink, not sparingly, but freely and abundantly, O Beloved. His holy Temples, and this heavenly Feast, are appointed and ordained for his Reception and Entertainments with his Beloved, *Rev. 2. 1. 2 Cor. 6. 16.* There are their most joyful meetings; and there do they hold and enjoy the most comfortable and heart-satisfying communion together, as holy hearts can and do often experience. For this end hath he instituted, and for this end should all Church-members receive this Ordinance.

4. As it is appointed for Communion between Christ and his inchurched-members, so likewise for their Communion among themselves, *1 Cor. 10. 16, 17.* Good men have heart-dividing, and love-separating lusts, self-Interests, world and Devil: and therefore they need all proper means to unite and knit their hearts together in Brotherly Love & Communion, *Col. 2. 2.* The Lord Jesus hath commanded, and strictly charged his people to love one another, as he hath loved them, *Joh. 13. 34. Joh. 15. 12, 15.* and that they love one another with pure hearts fervently, *1 Pet. 1. 22.* That they walk in love, and endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the Bond of peace, *Eph. 4. 1, 2, 3. Eph. 5. 1, 2.* Now in order to the obtainment of it, and that Believers may be encouraged to mind and do his will herein, the Lord Jesus hath by his own
Laws

Laws and Authority formed them up into holy Temples, and united them into spiritual Societies, and given them occasion and opportunity to meet together and feast themselves at his Table, at his cost and charges; and that as Guests of his own bidding. There they may often meet, sit down and feed together of his dainties. There they see and taste, feel and smell, and there they may speak of, & hear him, and of his grace and love. There they may see, that they are all bought with the same price and redeemed with the same blood. There they may see, that they are members together of the same head and body; that they are all *Plants* of his planting; *Trees* of his watering; Subjects of the same Grace and Spirit, and the same objects of his care and protection.

There they may see, that they are all *bone of his bones, and flesh of his flesh*; and that he hath fellowship and communion with them all: That they are *heirs together of the grace of life*, 1 Pet. 3. 7. and that they are all entitled to an *eternal inheritance*. There they may see, that they are all partakers of the same life, and that the Lord Jesus hath made the same provisions for the everlasting happiness of all their Souls. There they may see, that they have the *same faith and hope*, and that the covenant and promises belong to them all: That there is a mutual Interest amongst them, and that they are concerned in, and with each other: That they are engaged in one common cause with Christ, and that they are not their own, but one anothers.

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All which things and considerations, are of great use towards the knitting and endearing of their hearts one to another in spiritual love, holy peace, and Brotherly affection. For by their sitting down altogether as one body, at one Table of the Lord : eating and drinking the same Bread and Wine, and by faith, the same body and blood of the Lord : by beholding and believing their mutual interest in Christ, and in all the benefits of his death ; and that they are all alike invited to the feast, and all alike welcomb'd and entertained by their Lord and King: they are much induced thereby to love one another : to seek, desire and rejoyce in the good of each other, and to walk together as Heirs of the Kingdom of Glory ; *keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.* And likewise, in joyning hearts and hands together, as one body, in celebrating the worship, and in magnifying the name and glory of Christ.

5. An other great use and end of this Ordinance, is, *to knit and endear the heart to Christ himself.* And it is a powerful means to effect it. He is a most full and glorious Object of Love ; a most lovely Object indeed. *He is the fairest of Ten thousands, and altogether lovely,* or altogether loves, Cant. 5. 10. ult. *He hath all glorious excellencies in him, and is the perfection of beauty,* Psal. 50. 2. *All ye glories of the Heavens and the Earth, of Angels and men, are but dark shadows unto this Son of Righteousness.* The Lord Jesus is most lovely, glorious and beautiful, in his love and grace to us, in his obedience and death for us, and in all his Laws and Promises to us. But especially, his Person is most

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beautiful, glorious and lovely, *Psal.* 45. 1 *Cor.* 2. 8. his most transcendant and glorious excellencies, will be the eternal wonderment of Saints and Angels, and they shall be for ever employed in adoring and praising him. He is an Object too high for us (now) to reach, and a Sun too bright and glorious for our dim eyes to behold, only some Raies and Beams of his Glory, he causes to shine on us, and enables us to take them in, in some degree, *Psal.* 63. 1, 2. But of all means, the Lord's Supper is the most full and proper for the opening and representing unto us, unto our faith, the beauty, glory and loveliness of Christ, in his love and grace: in his death and sufferings.

There we may read wonderful Stories, and see glorious Mysteries indeed. There we may read and see his love and grace to us, streaming forth by his heart blood, and there we may see the greatness, freeness, profitableness, purity, sweetness, and the transcendant excellency of his love and loveliness. There we may see the eternal Fountain of love, and the inexhaustible Treasures of his heart, of his grace and kindness opened and running down to us; and there we may see a bottomless Sea of mercies and affections discovered. There we may read *Christ loving us, and giving himself for us, unto an accursed death*, *Gal.* 2. 20. *Gal.* 3. 13. And Oh! my Brethren, what an attracting, Soul drawing, heart-knitting object of love, is the Lord Jesus represented to be to us, in that Ordinance? It is a Glasse that represents and shews us nothing else, but love and Christs loveliness. It is an Ordinance that Preaches and Seals love to Believers;

lievers; and thereby provokes, enflames and drawes out their love to him. *Love will be drawn and not driven*; and what drawes it into warm and strong Acts, but lovely persons, things and actions? love and lovely objects irritates, and drawes forth love to them: and the more lovely, beautiful and glorious they are, the more forceably and powerfully they draw; as experiences shews, and we all know.

But then are such objects and things, most attractive and powerful, when they are our own, or when we know that we have a right unto, and an interest in them. Now in the Lord's Supper, you have these glorious objects and things handed out to you, and sealed to you in particular. *Take, eat, this is my body that was broken, and this is my blood that was shed for you*, 1 Cor. 11. 23, 24, 25. It speaks to sound-hearted Believers thus. Here is your glorious Head and King; your Redeemer and Saviour. Here is the body that was broken, and the blood that was shed for you. Here is your Covenant, and here are your promises sealed, ratified and confirmed, and here is free, eternal and distinguishing love and grace, shewed and given to you. Oh! how strongly must this draw their love, and how powerfully, must this enflame their affections to Jesus Christ? For this end it is appointed, and this it doth in measure effect in holy hearts.

6. It is instituted and appointed, to strengthen and nourish inburched Believers, and to make them fat and flourishing in the house of God, Psal. 92. 13, 14. Psal. 132. 13, 14, 15. Psal. 84. 4, 7.

Believers have many grace-weakening, and heart-wasting-lusts, Snares and Temptations; and therefore they have need of such strengthening, heart-cheering, and grace-nourishing means; that they languish not, but thrive and prosper, in the inner man. I have spoken somewhat of this before; when I shewed you the priviledges of the Churches, and the end for which all Believers should walk in Church-fellowship: and therefore shall not insist on it here. Only let me add, that you may find in this Ordinance, both *Food and Physick*. Here is (as in the hand of an Ordinance) food for your Souls, and nourishment for your Graces; and here is Physick for them also. Here is the bread of Life, and here is the water and wine of Life to; feed and comfort you, to fatten and nourish you, to build you up and establish you; and to make you strong men in Christ: to encourage and help you, and to make you fruitful in every good work, *Joh. 6. Col. 1. 10.* And here is not only food, but Heavenly and spiritual Physick too. Here you may have *Purging and cleansing-Physick*, and here you may have *comforting and refreshing Physick* also. And you do, and still you will need both. You need Lusts-purging, and Heart-purifying Physick: and behold here it is for you. Christ gave himself, and shed his blood, that it might purge, cleanse and heal us, and that it might in, and by his own means, be conveyed to us; I mean the vertue and efficacy of it, for that end, *Eph. 5. 25, 26, 27. Tit. 2. 14. 1 Joh. 1. 7, 9.* Now in this Ordinance, the purging, cleansing, and heart-purifying vertue of this blood is handed out, and conveyed to the faith

Faith of Believers, & which the Spirit in Christ's behalf applys, and which we for our selves are to apply also. The Spirit doth it powerfully and efficaciously, and we by Faith are to do it dutifully, and so it obtains its Ends on us: And as it is purging, cleansing, and heart-purifying Physick to our Souls, so it is Cordial Physick also, to refresh and comfort, to revive and chear our drooping, sad, and disconsolate Souls. Of this Blood, and for this End, we may drink freely and constantly! Here we may have our fill, and drink abundantly, according to our needs. Here you may Augment your Light, Faith, Peace, Hope, Joy, Courage, Zeal, Meekness, Love, and Patience; and here you may obtain a measure of all spiritual good. Here you may enrich your Souls with Christ, Grace, Assurance, Experiences and Consolations; and here you may obtain the destruction of your Lusts. Here you will have the Spirit to feed you with the Bread of Life, and here you may *grow like a Cedar in Lebanon*, *Psal. 92. 12, 13*. Therefore make use of this Ordinance for this blessed End also.

7. It is appointed *to shew and represent unto us the evil of sin also*. The great God represents sin to us in many glasses, and shews it in and by several means. He assures us that it is the Evil of Evils, the Plague of Plagues, and that it is the root and fountain, the link and sum of all Mischiefs; that it is unexpressibly and transcendantly evil, *Rom. 7. 13*. That it is the object of his loathing, abhorrence and hatred, as being that which hath turned glorious Angels into hateful Devils, and thrown them out of

Heaven into Hell; as that which hath defaced and marr'd his Image in men, and made them Enemies unto, and Rebels against God. This he declares to us in, and by his Word, his Law and Gospel; as also by the Judgments he executeth in the Earth on Sinners; yea, the whole Creation here below do loudly proclaim it. But the clearest glass wherein God opens and manifests the odiousness, and exceeding sinfulness of sin, is Christ's Death and Sufferings, which the Lords Supper plainly declares unto us, and where we may see it displayed in all its most hateful and abominable colours. Here you may by Faith, see the exceeding great Evil of it, and be provoked and stirred up to Hate, and abhor it, to eschew and avoyd it. For by beholding the Curse and Wrath of God, poured out on the Soul and Body of his dear Son, Gal. 3. 13. and by seeing him Reproached, Buffeted, Contemned, Despised, Crucified, Hanged, Nailed to the Cross, Cruelly handled, Tortured, Tormented, Pierced, Murdered, and above all, the weight of divine Vengeance pressing his precious Soul, and wringing out Bloody Sweats, and he pouring out his Soul to Death, and all for, and under the weight of our Sins and Guilt. Surely the sight of this, by Faith, will greatly raise our hatred of all sin, and dissuade us from it.

8. It is appointed and given to *encrease and strengthen our Gospel-Repentance too.* Here we may look on Him, whom we by sin have pierced, and mourn, and be in bitterness of Soul, Zach. 12. 10. for here is the Blood of the Scape Goat, that is able to break the most stony hearts in the

the world. And we stand in daily need of it, for we are in danger every day of *being hardened through the deceitfulness of sin*, and the world, *Heb. 3. 13.* But the Lord's Supper presents to us a heart-melting Object, yea, many such Objects. There we may see heart-melting Love, and there we may behold heart-breaking Grace. There we may perceive the *Lamb of God* making Attonement for our sins; and there we may understand that the Lord of Glory hath taken off from us our Sins, Guilt, and Punishment. There we may discern him standing in our stead, and between the living God and us Condemned dead men, with the *Censor of the Sanctuary* full of his precious Blood, making satisfaction for us to divine Justice. There we may know (in measure) how dearly He loved us, and how dear we have cost. There we may see our sins Pardoned, persons Accepted, God Reconciled and Well-pleased; & there we may hear him saying, *Deliver them out of Prison, for I have found and accepted a Ransom.* Surely, there is not a more powerful means in the World to produce and provoke to Repentance; yea, pure Gospel-Repentance in Believers, than the Lord's Supper is. For here are presented to us all the greatest and strongest Gospel-motives to unfained, Spiritual and Gospel-Repentance, to melt & soften the heart. It is love & Grace, the hopes of Pardon and Acceptance, and of being sanctified and saved, that provokes and produces Repentance unto Life, not Fear and Dread of Divine Wrath and Vengeance: Not the bare sight and Conviction of Sin, and the Apprehension of future punishment; no, but 'tis

the sense or hope (at least) of our persons being loved and accepted into favour with God, and of our being acquitted and justified through the blood of the Covenant that doth it.

9. To stir us up to *Admire, Adore, and Praise the great and free Love and Grace of God, and Jesus Christ our Lord.* They do in and by this Ordinance, set off and commend their free, eternal, and distinguishing Love and Grace unto Believers; and thereby give them occasion of Praising, Admiring, and Adoring it. These are some of God's Holy and Gracious Ends in appointing this Ordinance for, and giving it unto them; and these, and what-ever other uses and ends there are of it, should be diligently sought out and understood by all Believers. And being found out, they should be carefully, diligently, and faithfully aimed at and pursued by them.

Well then, do you joyn Issues with God, aim at, and carry on the holy Ends of Jesus Christ in this Gospel Ordinance; and by your so doing, you will please and honour him, and greatly profit your own Souls.

Quest. What are the necessary qualifications and preparations of all worthy Receivers of the Lords Supper; or what is required of, and ought to be found in them?

Ans. There qualifications and preparations are two-fold. 1. A *State* qualification or worthiness. 2. A *habitual and practical*, or actual fitness.

1. A *State*-worthiness or qualification, which in brief is this, or consists of these two things.

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1. *Regeneration.* 2. *Union with Christ by Faith.*(1.) *Regeneration, or a New Creature, 2 Cor.*

5. 17. This is absolutely necessary as to Salvation, *Joh. 3. 3, 5.* so to fit and qualifie men to, and for every good work. Without Regeneration, or being Born again, we cannot Believe, Repent, or Obey the Gospel in a right and acceptable manner. Without this change of Nature, we cannot love God, nor fear God; we cannot know him rightly, nor worship him Spiritually, *Joh. 4. 23, 24. Phil. 3. 3.* for we cannot Worship him with *Reverence and Godly fear*, until we are partakers of the Divine Nature, and of his special Grace to do it withal, *2 Pet. 1. 4. Heb. 12. 28.* In our Unregenerate States, we are *blind and dark*, *Eph. 5. 8. Dead in sins*, *Eph. 2. 1. 5. Enemies to God, and Strangers to the Lord Jesus Christ*, *Rom. 5. 10. Eph. 2. 12.* We are Carnal and Vain, Hard-hearted and Impenitent Sinners, and are shut up in Unbelief: Yea, we are Haters of God, and the power of Godliness, and excessive Lovers of Sin and the World, and altogether voyd of the Love of God, and of real love and pittie to our own Souls. Now then, it is absolutely necessary that we be Regenerated and Created in Christ Jesus unto good Works, *Eph. 2. 10.* for till then we are utterly incapable of doing them according to the Will of God. How then can we receive and partake of the Lords Supper worthily, until we are Regenerated and made New Creatures? How can we discern the Lords Body, *1 Cor. 11. 29.* and how can we understand the mystery, and take in the profit of Christ, his Death to our Souls, until we are taught

taught of God? How can we receive it in Faith, and in Obedience to his Will, until the Grace of Faith be formed in our hearts, and until our hearts are bowed and melted by Grace into the Holy Will of God? How can we Worship God, and Celebrate this Ordinance with lively hearts, whilst we are dead in sins? And how can we apply the Seal to that Grace which we have not? Therefore I say it is absolutely necessary that all that receive this holy Seal, be Regenerated and made New Creatures. For how can that Ordinance feed and nourish that which is not in Being, namely, the New Creature?

2. They must be *United to Jesus Christ by Faith* also. They must be in him, and have relation to him, as living Members to their Head, 2 Cor. 5. 17. Col. 2. 6. Christ must be theirs, and they must be his by Faith, or they cannot claim him as theirs, nor receive any benefit by his Death; for else, how can they joyn with Christ in his saying, *Take eat, this is my Body which is broken for you*, 1 Cor. 11. 23, 24. But I must hasten.

2. They must have an *habitual worthiness or meetness* for the right Receiving, and due Celebration of this Ordinance likewise: I mean a *holy and spiritual, ready and accurate frame and disposition* of heart to, & for it; they must have their Sight, Faith, and Love ready in act and exercise, or they are not, cannot be meet partakers of the Lord's Table. It is not only necessary that they be in a State of Justification and Regeneration, but they must be also in, or qualified with a habitual frame, posture, and disposition of

of heart, to receive and celebrate it to the Glory of Christ, and profit of their own Souls, *Tir. 3. 1.* Their Hearts and Graces must be ready fixed and tuned for the work, that they be not to seek of them, or at a loss concerning them, when they should honour Christ with, and get the Seal of the Spirit to them, *Psal. 57. 7. Psal. 108. 1. Psal. 112. 7.* This habitual meetness or worthiness, qualification, or preparation, (call it which you will) is a matter of great weight and moment, especially in this matter, and therefore you must labour all you can to obtain it.

2. There is a *practical and actual meetness* and preparedness for the worthy and acceptable receiving of the Lords Supper also. That is, there is something (more than ordinary) to be done by them in order to their worthy participating of it. This practical preparation I shall briefly present to you in some particulars.

1. You must *examine your selves*, *1 Cor. 11. 28.* But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the Bread, and drink of the Cup. And here 1. You must examine your *States*, and try if you be in the Faith or no: If you are indeed, (at least in a well grounded hope and persuasion in a justified and regenerate state and condition, *2 Cor. 13. 5. 2 Pet. 1. 10.* and to know whether the Lord Jesus and his special Grace be formed in your hearts, *Gal. 4. 19.* This must be effectually done by you, or you may be undone, *For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh his own Damnation, 1 Cor. 11. 29.* And if you should eat and drink this holy Supper, in an unregenerate and unjustified state; be you sure, that you will eat and drink damnation.

nation to your selves; for the Lord hath spoken it. This is not a matter to be dallied with.

2. Examine your selves, if you allow not of some sin, and if there be not one lust, carnal-self, or some one or more Idols indulged, and connived in at, and by you. For should you carelessly overlook this matter, and sit down at the *Kings Table* with any of them in you, and wink at it: be you assured, that the Lord Jesus will not accept and bless you: visit you and smile on your Souls; but he will loath your offering, and hide his face from your Souls. Therefore search and see what you can find of any of them in your hearts or hands; within or without you. For your great Lord *searches and tryes you*, Rev. 2. 23. Make an impartial, and diligent enquiry into this matter, and that with all possible integrity of heart, that God may see, that you are willing to know the worst of your selves. And do as *David* and others have done, in this weighty matter, Psal. 77. 6. *make diligent search*, and entreat the Lord to help you, Psal. 139. ult. Ask your selves, and try to purpose; do I not wink at and practically allow of Anger, Passion, Wrath; yea, of Hastiness, Rashness, Peevishness and Frowardness? Do not I wink at my Pride, worldly-mindedness, vanity of mind, and frothy discourses? Do not I hearken to *Tatlers*, and take up Reproaches against the Righteous, and do not I Reproach them also, by telling to others what I hear? Do not I worship God carnally, and in a formal and Hypocritical manner; and do not I live in the careless neglect of many Religious and Relative duties; day after day? Am not I a *Peacemaker*

breaker among my Relations and others, by a peevish and quarrelsome Spirit, instead of a Peace-maker? Am I not guilty of very much luke-warmness and indifferency of spirit in all Duties, as also of much idleness and mispending of pretious time? Do I not live as a stranger to God, and his holy will; and in an unacquaintedness with my self; and do not I slight my Gospel-mercies, and undervalue the good things that God gives me? Do I not leave my eternal concerns in doubt and at a great uncertainty, and live year after year in the dark, about my spiritual state? although I have sufficient means to enable me to make a right judgment of them; and am enjoined so to do, 2 Pet. 1. 10. 2 Cor. 13. 5.

3. *Examine* your selves, and try if you do act and move in duties by the Spirit of God; with, and from *Divine and Gospel principles*? Doth the life of Christ animate and quicken you, the love of Christ constrain and draw you; the light of Christ lead and conduct you; and the faith of Christ strengthen and encourage your hearts in them? Do you act and worship God with your own Spirit, or the holy Spirit of God? And do you worship him with special light, love, faith, and sincerity, or with common? For it is possible you may be mistaken, and take the one for the other. So likewise you should examine your *Aims and Ends*; what you Intend and Design in receiving of the Lords Supper? And you must also enquire what *Earnings and Improvements* you make of it, and what your Spiritual profit is? what you meet withall in it, and what good you receive from it?

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2. Whatever Evil you find in your Hearts or Hands; *you must throw out, and Repent of it.* You must not think it enough, and that your Work is done, when you have found out the *Plagues of your own Hearts*, 1 Kings 8. 38. But you must endeavour the speedy removal of them, *and thorowly amend your Wayes*, Jer. 7. 3, 5. You must confess them to God unfeignedly, humble your selves; *and Repent in Dust and Ashes*, Job. 42. 6. 2 Chro. 7. 14. yea, you must also Hate and Abhor them, forsake and Mortifie them; and resolve to have no more to do with them.

3 You must also prepare your selves, by *emptying the Heart of Carnal-self, and the World*: for else these things will greatly Obstruct your Holy and Profitable receiving of this Ordinance. The more the Heart is emptied, the more it will Hunger and Thirst after it, and the good and profit of it: the stronger your Desires will be after Christ, and the benefits of his Death, the clearer you will see them, and the Sweeter they will be unto your Taste. The emptier you are of these Heart-suffocating Evils, the more Desirable, Beautiful, Acceptable and Pleasant they will be unto your Souls; and the greater and more apparant, will your Earnings and Advantages be to your Souls., As you will abundantly Experience, if you make proof of it.

4. Prepare for the Worthy and Profitable receiving of this Holy and Soul enriching Ordinance; by *possessing your Hearts with the Excellency and Goodness, the Priviledge and Profit of it.* Get as clear Apprehensions and Conceptions

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ons as you can, of the Person, the Love, Grace and Benefits, it holds forth unto you, and who it is you go to meet withall there. For the clearer your sight is of these things, and the more the Heart is possessed and affected with them, the more they will stir up and provoke your Faith, enflame your Love, and draw your Hearts to them. The clearer they lye in your Heads, (your Minds) and the warmer they lye on your Hearts, the more Influential and forceable they will be on all your Affections and Graces, to quicken, raise and draw them forth into act and Exercise.

5. Prepare, by getting a due sight and sense of your own Wants and Weakness: your own personal Vileness and Unworthiness, and of your own Sins and Iniquities. That the due sight and sense of these Evils, may make you Vile in your own Eyes, debase and humble your Hearts. That you may be truly Base and Vile in your own Eyes, and draw nigh to him with a *Holy fear and Trembling*, Esa. 66. 2. Psal. 2. 11. That you may go to him, and make use of this Ordinance, for the supply of your Wants, and strengthening your Weaknesses, and that you may be sensible of the worth and necessity of Christ's Death for you.

6. Get high and great Expectations, raised in your Hearts, of seeing, enjoying and receiving a measure of all the fulness of Christ, and his benefits, or the fruits of his Death. The Lord Jesus will be most free and open handed there, to all worthy Receivers: and therefore, you must not go to it, and him, with dejected, fearful and low Spirits and Hopes. But you must

go to them with high and great Hopes and Expectations, of finding him and receiving high and great things from him. Be sure, that he would have you do so, that it is your Duty, and that you shall find him a liberal and noble Benefactor to you. Yea, that he will far exceed your highest regular Expectations from him, in his Princely favours, and glorious distributions to your Souls.

C H A P. XIII.

Where are several Questions Answered and Resolved.

Quest. **W** Hether a Church-member may withdraw or absent himself from the Lord's Supper, upon any Sin, or Offence given him, by one or more of his Fellow-members in the Church?

Ans. The offended Member may not withdraw, nor by any means absent himself on that Account. Too many indeed are apt to think, (and they Act accordingly) that they have a Dispensation to neglect their Duty, and practically to slight their Priviledge, because others are not so good as they should be, and have given them Offence. But that which gives them such a Dispensation, is their own Pride, Ignorance, Prejudice and wilfulness, not Jesus Christ their Head. But I say, you may not absent your selves, or neglect that great Ordinance upon such Accounts. (1) Because it is your Duty to receive it, and wait on Christ in it, (as hath

hath been shewed) and it is not anothers Sin, that can discharge you of your Duty. (2) If thy Brother hath sinned, and thereby incapacitated himself for a worthy receiving, and celebrating of this holy Ordinance ; thou hast the greater Reason offered thee, to come and receive it worthily to the honour of Christ. For it is most unreasonable, that he should be deprived of the Glory of his Grace, and thy Duty, because thy Brother hath sinned against him, and dishonoured him already. (3) Hast thou rebuked thy sinning Brother, and laboured to bring him to Repentance ? and art thou mourning, and praying for him, and waiting on God for his Recovery, as thou art bound to do ? *a Cor. 5. 2.* Why ! then his Sin shall not be laid to thy Charge ; neither may it impede or hinder thy Reception of this Ordinance. (4) It is thy Prejudice and Wrath against, if not thy Loathing and Hating of the offending Person, that causes thy Neglect, or the Guilt thou hast contracted to thy own Soul and Conscience, that makes thee forbear coming to the Lord's Table, and not a dutiful and conscientious Forbearance, because God would have it so. For it is contrary to his holy Will. (5) Allow of this, and you will never want occasions, but the Devil and your own Lusts will still supply you with enough, to provoke and perswade you to a total neglect of this Duty.

Quest. Suppose I find my self unfit and indisposed to receive the Lord's Supper, may not I neglect it ?

Ans. No : for thy waiting on Christ at his Table is thy Duty, as hath been proved. And

therefore thou must not think of neglecting it; but the more unfit and indisposed thou findest thyself to be, the more seriously, diligently and vigorously thou shouldst labour to prepare thyself, and get the removal of thy Indispositions: To obtain and put on the *Wedding Garment*, that thou mayst worthily partake of this Ordinance. *If the Iron be blunt, the harder you must strike*, Eccl. 10. 10. The more unprepared you are, the more and greater diligence you must use to prepare. I know that Church-members are subject to this Temptation, which if yielded to, will bring on many Mischiefs upon their Souls, as some have sadly experienced. But what hinders, that you endeavour not the removal of these Evils presently? you may not alwayes live so, but one time or other you must get rid of them, unless you will perish. And when will you find a fitter time for the doing of it, than now? Therefore know, that you have two great and indispensable Duties lying before you. 1. To use all means for the removing all Obstructions, and to get your Hearts in a ready meet posture for God and your Duties, *Amo. 4. 12.* (2) To wait on Christ at his Table on the next opportunity, *1 Cor. 11. 28.* and not to add Sin to Sin by neglecting either of them.

Quest. What do you think of those Members, who do wilfully neglect to come to the Lord's Table very often, and for a long time together? or of such as will ride out of Town such dayes, as they are called to partake of it?

Ans. First, either they are dead rotten Members, such as are mentioned in Matth. 13. 20, 21. Joh. 15. 2, 6. Heb. 6. and Heb. 10. or else

else they have foully back-sliden from God, and contracted much guilt and hardness of Heart. You may be sure that matters go very ill with them at home, and that they are in a withering and dying condition: that they have wickedly forsaken God, and God hath forsaken them, 2 Chron. 15. 2. They have most horribly sinned against Knowledge and Conscience, grieved the holy Spirit, and alienated their Hearts from God. They have lost the favour of Christ, that was on their Hearts, the Conscience of, and love to their Duties, all care of, and respect to their own and their Brethren's Souls; and have with Ephraim, cast off the thing that is good; and therefore Evil pursues them, Hosea. 8. 3. and they are under the Temptations of the Devil. For were it not thus with them, they could not, durst not do as they do in this great and weighty matter. The sight of their Duty, the sense of their own wants, and their love to Christ, their Brethren and their own Souls, would in no wise permit, or dispense with such wilful neglects of so great a Duty and Priviledge, and to keep at a distance from their God. And if you mind them, and have close discourse with them about spiritual things, you may find them neglecters and slights of other Duties; of Carnal, Vain, Sottish and Stupid Spirits; and that their Hearts and Souls are in a sad and miserable condition. They desire not, care not for your Company, nor to hear you talk with them about their Soul's concernments. And if they pretend any excuse, or offer to defend their neglects; be sure they will cast all, or most of the blame or cause off from themselves on o-

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thers; which argues a vile wicked Spirit. They neglect the Lord's Table, not because their own Hearts & Wayes are very evil and abominable, (if any will believe them) no; but because their Ministry, the Church, or some particular Members of it are not good enough for their Communion. And herein they blaspheme or scandalize them, and offer violence to their own Consciences, for the clearing of themselves, and in belying their Teacher or Brethren.

Quest. Is not Excommunication an Ordinance of Christ in his Church?

Answ. Yea, it is a great and useful Ordinance, which may not be neglected, when need requires, on any pretence whatsoever; because the Lord Jesus, the King and Head of his Churches hath instituted and commanded it to be done; and hath thereby made it their indispensable Duty, *Matth.* 18. 15, 16, 17. *1 Cor.* 5. 4, 5, 11, 12, 13. *2 Thes.* 3. 6, 14.

Quest. For what ends must the Church use this Ordinance? and why hath Christ appointed it, and commanded the Administration of it?

Answ. For these Six ends, 1. To remove Offence from the Church, For a scandalous Member continuing in his Impenitency is a Stumbling-block to them. 2. The healing of the Offender, by bringing him to deep Conviction of his Sin, and Repentance for it: to humble him, to cause him to own and acknowledge his Sin, and amend his Wayes, *2 Cor.* 2. 5, 6, 7. 3. To clear the Church of the guilt of his Sin. For if they neglect their Duty, and so practically wink at his Sin, they involve themselves in

in the guilt of it, 1 Tim. 5. 22. 4. To caution others, and cause them to hear and fear, and do not so wickedly, Deut. 21. 21. Deut. 17. 12, 13. 5. To free the Church from Reproach and Scandal from without; for their Enemies will undoubtedly defame them, if they hear that they suffer visible Transgressors among them. 6. To purge out the Leaven, that the Church may be a pure Lump; 1 Cor. 5. 7, 8. and a holy Habitation of God, Eph. 2.

Quest. When must this Ordinance be used in the Church?

Ans. Only in case of necessity, when other means will not convince and bring Offenders to serious and hearty Repentance, prevent or remove the other Evils, or obtain the Ends before mentioned, Matth. 18. 15, 16, 17.

Quest. What is Excommunication?

Ans. It is the cutting off a Church-member from his Membership with the Church, putting him out of their Communion and Society, and shutting him out from the enjoyment of all Church-Priviledges, & putting him into the Devils Kingdom: or to deliver him to Satan, in the name of Christ, for the destruction of the flesh, that his Spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord, 1 Cor. 5. 4, 5. It is variously expressed in Scripture in the fore-quoted Texts, Matth. 18. 2 Thes. 3. 1 Cor. 5.

Quest. But is not Excommunication an high Act of Cruelty, and too great Severity for a Church to use towards their Fellow-members?

Ans. No. For it is one of Christ's healing Medicines, wherewith he cures Souls, and one of his soveraign Means whereby he sets broken bones

bones in joynt. The loving, kind and compassionate Head and Father of his People hath not such a heart towards them, neither hath he shewed any Cruelty or undue Severity towards them in his appointing this Ordinance for his Churches, and requiring the Execution of it on obstinate Transgressors for their Health & Cure.

2. The executing of this healing Ordinance on such, is so far from being an Act of Cruelty, as that it is one of the highest Acts of our Love, Favour and Kindness to their Souls; and the wilful neglect of it, is one of the highest Acts of Cruelty, that we can shew them. For to let a Brother alone in his Sin and known Wickedness, see him in the Ditch and leave him there: knowing him dropping into Hell, and not use the means the Lord hath given us, for the helping of him out, and preventing of his eternal Ruine, is such a piece of Cruelty and horrible Injustice, as that there can hardly be greater found among men. If it be Cruelty in me to use the Lords means for saving of my Brother's Soul, then let it be so called and accounted, not else. And great is their simple Ignorance, or wilful Blindness, who think and talk after this rate; and too many of them, are found in the Churches of Christ.

Quest. But for what sins should this Ordinance be administred to, or executed on Church-members?

A. For any sins that are not unavoydeable Infirmities, if persisted in, & the Offenders reject or neglect to hear, receive, and improve Reproofs, to their Conviction, Sorrow, and Amendment; to their deep Humiliation, Confession and volun-

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Voluntary Acknowledgment. The Lord Jesus hath not told us in particular, for what sins Offenders should be Excommunicated out of the Church; but tells us in *Matth. 18: 15*: *that if thy Brother sin against thee*. He names not the particular sin or sins; but that expression implies any sin, that is not an unavoidable infirmity in him. And mark it, It is not the matter of the sin that is so much to be minded, as the manner of sinning, and the Circumstances wherewith it is attended. As 1. If a sin that is generally known among Professors of the Gospel, and owned to be a sin, and which the Sinner cannot be ignorant of, especially when it is laid before him, and opened to him by the Reprover. (2.) VVilfully, or carelessly committed. (3.) If it be a scandalous sin, and pernicious to God or Men. (4.) If committed upon deliberation. (5.) VVith heat and fervour of spirit. (6.) If committed after Conviction of the Evil of it, and Repentance for it. (7.) If it be persisted in after Admonition, or the Offender shall slight or neglect Brotherly Reproof under it, and shall contemn the first and second Admonition turning a deaf ear to it; or shall not repent and give satisfaction for the wrong he hath done by his sin; I say, let the matter of the sin be what it will, if attended with some, or all these Circumstances and Aggravations; the Church may by Christ's Authority proceed against him, and cut him off. To name some few of the many sins, which if not repented of, but persisted in, which they may be judged to do; until they manifest open Repentance. (1) Strong & violent Passions, (2.) Apparent Wrath, Envy, Bitterness, and Anger shewed,

shewed without great provocation. (3.) Apparent Frowardness, Peevishness, Clamour, & Strife. (4.) Jangling, Disputing, & Peace-breakings, & all things that directly tend to hinder the Edification and Peace of the Church. (5.) Backbitings, and speaking evil against, or of one another. (6.) Constant or frequent neglects of Family and Church-duties, and the Ordinances of God in them. (7.) Needless Associating and holding Communion with profane and scandalous persons. (8.) Defrauding any persons of their just dues any way, on any account whatsoever, when it might have been prevented. (9.) Disobedience to the Lawful Commands and Rules of Parents, Masters, Magistrates, Elders, or any other that have Authority over them. (10.) Publishing false Doctrines against the Fundamentals of the Gospel, Faith, and Worship. (11.) False Accusing any Persons, especially any of the Church. (12.) Railing at, or reviling others to their face, or behind their backs. (13.) Idleness, Tatling, and being Busy-bodies in other mens matters that concern them not. These, and many more of like import, are such apparent sins, as that Church-members cannot be supposed to be ignorant of them, and they are very offensive Evils to God and men. So likewise is wilful deserting and causeless leaving of a Church at their own will and pleasure, and thereby have broken the Covenant of God. I have not room to enlarge on these brief hints of this matter; but I could otherwise say much more for the clearing and confirming of it.

Quest. *May Churches keep out such persons as offer themselves to joyn with them, at their own will and pleasure, without apparent cause?* Ans.

Ans. No, they may not; for 1. We have no dispensation to do so, but are bid to receive them, Rom. 14. 1. Rom. 15. 7. (2.) The Primitive Churches did receive persons, as soon as they proffered to joyn with them, unless they had any just cause to deny them; and what they did therein, was by Apostolical direction. (3.) By refusing to accept them into Communion *speedily* (without just cause) they do greatly wrong and injure them, and grieve such as the Lord would not have grieved. (1.) They keep them out of their Right, and detain from them their just dues; they deprive them of their Priviledges which Christ hath bought for them. And (2.) Lay them under many and great Temptations to sin and despond. (4.) They rob God of his Honour and Glory, which he might receive from them in their Church-duties. (5.) They discourage persons from coming to, and joyning with them, and so expose themselves to ruine. For the Churches cannot long subsist without continual additions of new Members, because death is still fetching away, and pulling out of the old. (6.) They do expose themselves to reproach and just censure by such wilful neglects towards them. (7.) Ordinarily, they may be either received or rejected in one week, as well as in three months, did all mind and attend to their duty in their place in the Churches. Take heed that this evil be not found in or among you; for assuredly it is a foul Iniquity to rob God, wrong Souls, and injure the Church; to grieve the hearts of the Godly, and tempt them to sin; which Iniquity you are guilty of, who by your negligenc
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or prejudice do keep them from Church Ordinances, who desire to partake of them with you, longer than of necessity.

Quest. May not Pastors leave their Churches upon any account whatsoever?

Ans. Doubtless God may, and sometimes he doth providentially call them off, and they ought to follow it. For (1.) There is not any Precept of Christ enjoining them to stay with them all their days. (2.) Christ tells them, that if they be persecuted in one City, they may fly to another, Matth. 10. 23. But they may not leave them, no, not with the Churches consent and approbation, but upon some extraordinary Providences and Calls of God. For as Christ their Master sent them there, and they were settled there by him, as the great Agent and Doer of it, to do his work, and minister in his Name, and by his Authority, with his Gifts & Blessing; so the Churches have nothing to do to dismiss and give them liberty to depart without the good leave and consent of Christ himself, who sent and set them in and among them. And therefore their leaving of the Churches, and the Churches dismissing of them, is not their own act, but in and by the order and commission of Christ. What they do therein, must be only in, from, and by the Will and Pleasure of their Head and King, and not from their own. For without Warrant from him, the Churches have no power to leave their Pastors, nor their Pastors them.

Quest. When, or upon what accounts may Pastors leave their Churches?

A. s. First, when they are severely persecuted, and their Enemies level their fiery Darts, and

and shoot their Arrows of malice against their Persons and Families; and persist in their so doing, so as that there is no probable way to escape them, but in all probability they shall be devoured by them. In this case, the Lord Jesus, the Apostles, and the Elders at Jerusalem fled and went their way; and hereby the Lord doth often call off Pastors now. (2.) In case the Churches leave them, and will not stand by them. (3.) In case their Churches fall into Rents & Schisms, and they grow so head-strong and unruly, as that they can do no good upon them, as somtimes it falls out. (4.) In case they cannot live and subsist with and by them, but in a miserable and distressed condition. For if the Churches provide not for them, and they have not otherwise a subsistence, they are not bound to provide for their Churches. For *God hath ordained, that they, that preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel*, 1 Cor. 9. 14. and they must live by Bread, and provide for their Families, *or they deny the Faith, and are worse than Infidels*, 1 Tim. 5. 8. (5.) In case the Lord doth open a door for their Ministry else-where, which is always to be observed in this matter. If Providence invite them else-where to minister to a People that they knew not of, and sought not after, but the hand of Providence presented it to them (as it were) accidentally, and are by that strange people (as to them) desired to preach to, and take the care of them; and so they lay not down their work, but follow it in those other places, where in all probability they may do Christ and Souls greater Service, and not expose themselves thereby to those

straits

Straits and Temptations to sin, they were in before : I say, take in this case with any of the other, & I am satisfied their Call is clear to leave their Churches.

Quest. May Church-members leave their Churches at their own will and pleasure, and go else-where when they please?

Ans. No, they may not : They must not leave them, unless by some extraordinary hand of Providence the Lord calls them off, to walk with another people. If by Persecution or by Poverty, or by the command of their Parents, Husbands, or Masters, or other Superiours, they are called off, they may go with the Churches consent, as likewise in other weighty cases. But they may not go from them at their own will and pleasure, to gratifie their Pride, Prejudice, and to please their own fickle minds and itching ears, or upon any ordinary account whatsoever ; and that for these reasons, (1.) The Lord charges them not to forsake their Churches, nor holding Communion and Fellowship with them in the Ordinances and Worship of God, *Heb.* 10. 24, 25. (2.) He brands them, and sets a black mark of Ignominy on all wilful and causeless Deserters of Churches, *1 Joh.* 2. 19. *Heb.* 10. 25, 26. *as the manner of some is*, which is a contemptuous expression of them, who forsake their Church-membership, and their places, work and duty there. (3.) Deserters of their Church-membership at their own will and pleasure do make the Churches thereby to be like *Inns or Ale-houses*, where persons go in and out at their own will and pleasure. Such as do so in Families and civil Societies, are accounted vile, lawless

less and extravagant persons, because they live not under good Laws, nor walk by the good Rules and Orders of the Society. How much more vile and lawless are Church-members, who have given up themselves in a professed subjection to Christ, 2 Cor. 9. 13. and engaged to walk as Church-members, and yet shall walk, act, and go in and out, as lawless persons, who owe no subjection to Christ, nor to his Laws and Authority in the Church? (4) Wilful Deserters of Churches, are notorious Covenant-breakers also. When they gave the right hand of Fellowship, and were received into the Church, they solemnly promised to walk with God in the Church, hold Communion with it, subject unto, and live under the Government and according to the Laws thereof, until God should by some extraordinary Providence call them off: Yet notwithstanding they call off themselves, and they do thereby practically contemn and trample on their solemn Engagement, as well as on the Laws, Orders and Government of Christ. (5) Their causeless and wilful departure from, and leaving of a Church, to which they were joyned, is very reproachful and scandalous to the Church. For by their so forsaking of it, they declare that they are too good, and the Church is too bad for their Communion. They cast dirt on the Church and the Ministry of Christ therein with a witness, and manifest that either themselves, or the Church and the Ministry there, are very vile and wicked: Or else why did they leave and forsake them? It was either for their Goodness or Wickedness. Not for their Goodness in their

account; for should they pretend to leave them for their Goodness, they will thereby lay open their own Hypocrisy and Profaness to all men, and be sure that they will not do in words at least. Why then, what follows, but that the cause of their departure is the Churches and their Ministers Wickedness or Unworthiness? Thus they will do, and care not what mischief they do unto the Church, so they may but save stakes and gratifie their own Lusts. (6) Such Deserters of Churches are Church-destroyers: they fight against God, and pull down that which he builds up. God puts in and fastens stones, and they pull them out. He sets up and forms holy Temples for himself to dwell in, 2 Cor. 6: 16, Eph. 2: ult. and they break them down, or deface and mar them at least. What Churches can stand in order, form and beauty, if the Members of them may do what they please, and go in and out when they will? (7) By such departures from their Churches they cut off and cast out themselves from the People of God, his Worship and Ordinances, and put themselves into the Devils Kingdom again. For they may not, ought not to be accepted or received into any of the Churches of Christ elsewhere, because they are disorderly walkers, and are under the blot of scandalous persons, of lawless and disobedient Members. (8) They may not depart, because of the just occasion of Offence, Grief and Trouble, that they will give the Church thereby; excepting in extraordinary cases, or are necessitated by staying and holding Communion with the Church to partake with them in Sin. And it is remarkable, how God

God hath declared his abhorrence of such departures by the judgments, that have followed such as have been guilty of it.

Finally my Brethren ; let us all mind and follow the things that make for peace, and things wherewith one may edifie another, Rom. 14. 19. Let us in all our doings and procedures, consult and endeavour to know the will of God, walk by his Laws, conform to, be ruled by, and practise the holy and perfect will of our glorious Head, & sovereign Lord and King, Joh. 14. 15. Joh. 15. 10. Rom. 12. 1, 2. Eph. 6. 6. Joh. 14. 21, 23. 1 Joh. 5. 2, 3. Let us never adventure on any actions or things, until we have a Divine Warrant for it, and when we have that in our eye, let us proceed with all our might, doing that which is the Will of God, and that because it is his Will. For then we may, and shall be able to do our works comfortably. Then we shall do them as the holy Will of God in obedience to his Command and Authority. Then shall we please and honour our Head and King, and by Faith and Hope look for, and expect his free and gracious Acceptance, and his promised Assistance ; as also a great Reward in this life and that which is to come. Then you may confidently expect, and chearfully look for Fellowship and Communion with God in all your ways and Duties, when in your places and stations, you are really observing and doing the holy and perfect Will of God, and not your own.

F I N I S.